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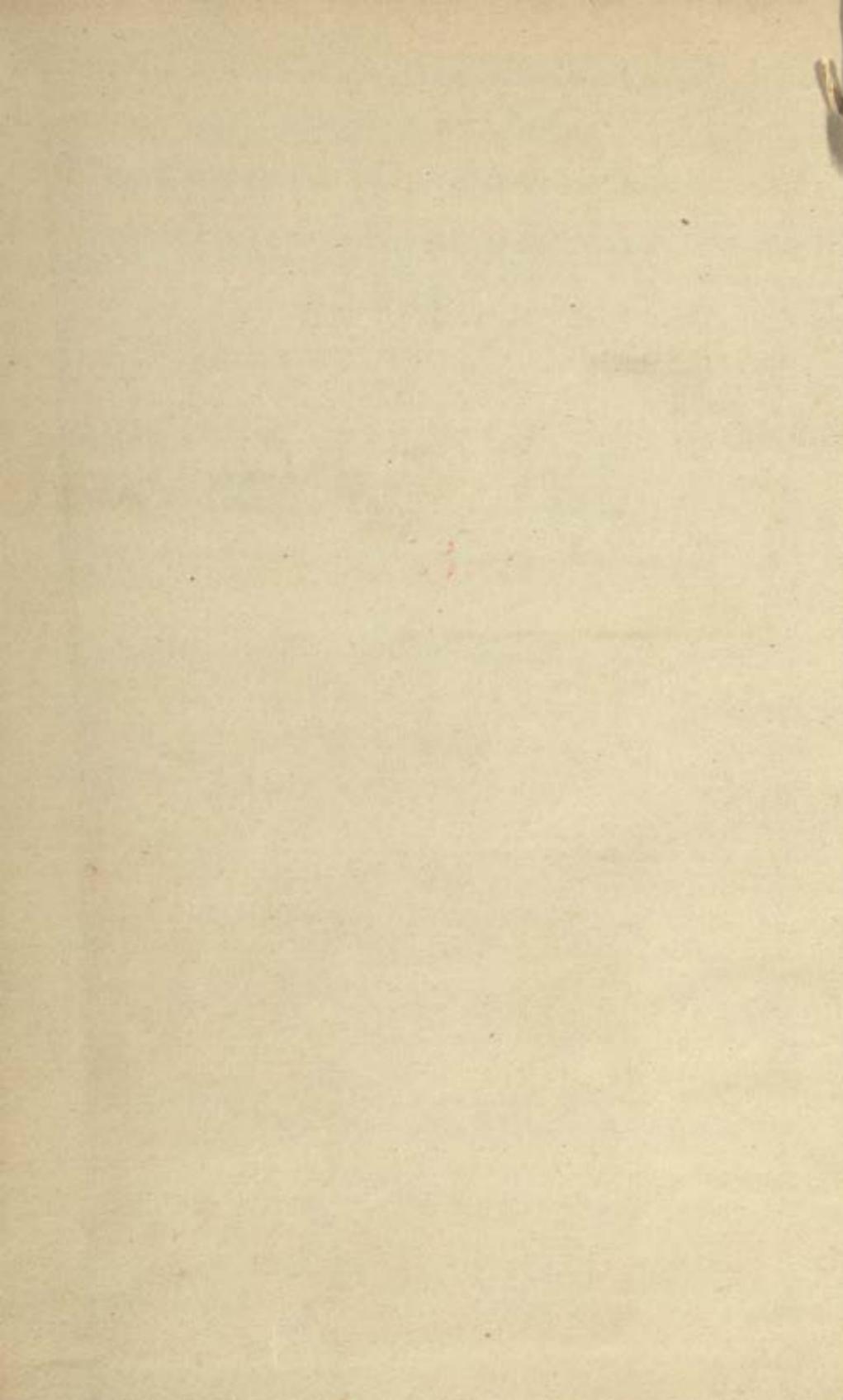
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VOL. II

(Ranjit Singh & post Ranjit Singh period)

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By

G. S. Chhabra

M. A., Ph. D.

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2. Mōisan Sūndy Hāsasdi!

Le Roi de la jungle est

Préf. à l'ordre du Roi des singes
Gautam Kshetra

To

S. Mohan Singh Hadiabadi

FOR HIS LOVE

IN

The History of the Punjab.

FOREWORD

I have glanced through Dr. G. S. Chhabra's new book entitled "The Advanced History of the Punjab" Vol. II, Ranjit Singh and post Ranjit Singh period. It gives me great pleasure to find that Dr. Chhabra has tried to break new ground in certain respects, particularly in the post-annexation period.

His sketch of Maharaja Dalip Singh and Har Dyal, and accounts of the Socio-Cultural movements in the Punjab, the Ghadr Party and the Kamagata Maru are not only interesting but illuminating.

The book has been brought out well, and is bound to prove useful to the students of history as well as to the public in general.

I wish Dr. Chhabra to continue his studies further, and complete the survey of the Punjab history upto date.

Hari Ram Gupta

M. A. Ph. D., D. Litt.

Prof. & Head of the History Department.
Punjab University.

Hoshiarpur.

March 31, 1960.

P R E F A C E

It is more than two years back that a suggestion was made to me by my worthy teacher, Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, M. A., Ph. D., D. Litt., that I should write a book on the Punjab History, which should cover Ranjit Singh and post Ranjit Singh period. While I did not take this suggestion seriously in the beginning, yet my interest in the subject developed, and as I was called upon to teach a part of the same subject to the M. A. classes, I tried to collect the matter as exhaustively as possible. Much of the matter thus collected, was published in some newspapers and journals, such as the Hindustan Standard, the Hindustan times, the Sikh Review and the Spokesman etc. And as the number of the articles thus published increased, the idea of the book matured, and finally, about six months back, I had to take up the matter seriously, which resulted in the compilation of that matter into the shape of this book.

The book is before the readers. And as the work stands to-day, I can confidently say that no effort has been spared and no possible source left untouched to make the book as complete and informative as possible. As there exists no one book at present in the market which could cover the entire range of the subject dealt with here, the book in hand is expected to fulfil the requirement. I have often received enquiries from those interested in the subject, in India as well as in the different countries over-sea such as Canada, England Malaya and Australia etc., who after reading my articles in one or the other journal, wanted to know if I could refer some book to them which could cover whole of this period. I am confident that their requirement will now be met.

The book starts with an account of ancestors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. A full account is given of the development of the Sukerchakia misl under Ranjit Singh's forefathers. Then follows an account of the Annexations and Conquests made by the Maharaja himself. His relations with British have been discussed at length. After discussing his Civil and Military Administration, and after an account of the different chiefs of his Darbar, the factors leading to the downfall of the Sikh power have been dealt with. Then follow the two Anglo-Sikh wars, ending in the Annexation of the Punjab by the British. The next chapter deals with Maharaja Dalip Singh, and the book now enters into the British period of the Punjab History. Details of the Administrative Settlement made by the British in the Punjab are followed by a chapter on the Mutiny in the Punjab. Then all the Socio-Cultural movements which were organised under the British are dealt with, followed by an account of political movements and Disturbances in the Punjab.

Every effort has been made to make the account as impartial as possible. No effort has been spared in making the account as much critical as required, and no hesitation has been shown in expressing a free appreciation where the facts so command. Still however, any suggestion in the connection and regarding the facts themselves will be gratefully received.

This book as it is, it may be mentioned, constitutes only second volume of the complete Advanced History of the Punjab, which I propose to write. Ranjit Singh and the post Ranjit Singh period has been covered, and if the circumstances favour, it is firmly hoped that first volume dealing with the Guru period and the post-Guru period before Ranjit Singh, will be out in about five months' time.

Before closing this account I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my gratefulness to my respected teacher Dr. Hari Pam Gupta, who after guiding me for my Ph. D work, originated the idea in my mind for writing out this work. I am grateful to the Managing Committee of the Ramgarhia College Phagwara, which, under the able leadership of Sardar Mohan Singh Hadiabadi, has created an atmosphere of original research and studies in the Punjab History from which I benefited. I am thankful to my students whose inquisitive minds caused me to search the subject deeper; to my wife, who gave me ungrudging assistance in proof-reading and in meeting the daily requirements of my life, thus affording the leisure for me to plan and write; and to the friends such as Professors Iqbal Singh, Bupinder Singh and Jaswant Lal Mehta, who gave me suggestions to make the work as best and as interesting as I could.

G. S. Chhabra
F-49, Kamla Nagar,
Delhi—6.

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MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH

CHAPTER I

The Ancestors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Over three centuries before Ranjit Singh was born, Kalu, a jat of Waraech Got, moved to a village named Sansi, situated about 4 or 5 kos west of Amritsar. This happened in 1470. The village at the time, was the resort of a notorious wandering and plundering tribe of the same name. Here a son was born to him who was later named as Jaddoman. Kalu left this village shortly after and moved to an other village named Sand, where he died in 1488. Jaddoman was a brave man with the spirit of adventurers. He is said to have taken up the profession of the Sansi Tribe and was killed during one of his plundering expeditions, in 1515. His son Galeb, followed the foot-steps of his father and is said to have been the very best in his profession. He died in 1549, leaving behind him a son named Kiddoh who, about the year 1555, moved to Sukerchak, a small village about $1\frac{1}{2}$ kos south of Gujranwala. It was this village, which gave the name Sukerchakia, to the misl, the successors of Kiddoh organised in the eighteenth century.

Kalu

died leaving
a son
Jaddoman

Kiddoh
moved to
Sukerchak.

Kiddoh was a man of peaceful dispositions. He was God-fearing and started peaceful life of a labourer at the land. He died in 1578, leaving behind two sons Rajadeb and Premu. Rajadeb continued the peaceful and honourable life of his father and opened a small grocer's shop in his village. He was not a very much learned man but knew the Landa characters in which he was able to read and write. And

Rajadeb

for this, he was respected in his village as a man of letters and wisdom. Besides, he also continued the agricultural pursuits of his father.

Takht Mal

Rajadeb died about 1620, and left behind three sons, Nilu, Telu and Takht Mal. The first two died while still young, while Takht Mal expanded his business yet further. By this time, the family had collected considerable cash, and besides the business of shop-keeping of his father, he also started lending money to the people on interest, and within a short time became a banker of name and fame. He was considered to be an important man of his village. He died in 1653 and was survived by two sons Balu and Bara.

Bara under
Sikh
influence.

Bara was a man of religious dispositions and fell under the influence of the Sikh faith, started by Baba Nanak. He was a passionate reader of Granth, the sacred book of the Sikhs. At the age of 25, he decided to receive Sikh baptism at Amritsar and proceeded thither. But due to some accident, he could not reach Amritsar to fulfill his desire, but this rather sharpened his interest in Sikhism, and the rest of his life was spent in preaching about, the philosophy of Guru Nanak in the adjoining villages.

Buddha
received
Pahul

Bara died in 1679, before this, he was an owner of about half the land of his village Sukerchak. He was a man of still more importance and fame, both as a preacher and as a man of means. At his death bed, he left for his son Budda, who at the time was about 9 years of age, a dying injunction to proceed to Amritsar and receive the Pahul. Budda did proceed to Amritsar, on attaining the age of discretion¹, and is considered to be one of those lucky persons who received pahul from the very hands of Guru Gobind Singh. "He was,

1. See Gordon, 'The Sikhs,' P. 80

however, not a man of peaceful disposition, as his father and grand-father had been, but was courageous, enterprising and sagacious.¹ After having received the baptism of the 10th Sikh Guru, his name had been converted from Budda to Budh Singh. Singh means a lion and in his daring adventures, Budh Singh was actually no less than a lion. The success which attended his exploits, soon won for him the reputation of being the boldest and the most resolute of the "Sikhs in the country²." On his body, this man had as many as forty scars of swords, spears and bullets³. "The mare on which Budh Singh used to ride was a piebald, and was as famous in the country as its rider. People called this mare Desi, hence the nickname Desu given to Buddha Singh. It is said he swam across the Jhelum, the Ravi and Chenab fifty times on his mare...He was good humoured, ready witted and merciful to the oppressed...He died of apoplexy in 1716. His wife, overwhelmed with grief at his death, ran a sword through her heart. The bodies of husband and wife were burnt together⁴". Budh Singh was survived by his two sons, Nodh Singh and Chanda Singh. It was from the latter that the Sondhanwalia family originated.

Nodh Singh married the daughter of a wealthy land lord of Majitha, and constructed a big house for himself in the village Sukerchak, of the type of a small fortress. After constructing this house, it occurred to him that when he had built for himself such a big house, he should also have some companions to guard it and protect it from the Afghan invaders. Soon, therefore, he raised a band of 30 horsemen, which may be called the foundation of the Sukerchakia misl.

Nodh Singh
raised
a band of
30 horse
men

1. Latif, 'History of the Punjab,' p. 337.

2. Ibid, p. 337.

3. See Sir Lepel Griffin, 'The Punjab Chiefs,' i, p. 220

4. Latif, p. 337

Joined
Fyzulpuria
misl.

With these 30 horsemen, he became famous for his bravery and courage, and was dreaded from Rawalpindi to the banks of Sutlej. His influence increased simultaneously with his wealth. When in 1730, according to Latif, Nodh Singh joined the Fyzulpuria misl of Nawab Kapur Singh, about the time of the first invasion of the Abdali King, Ahmad Shah, and, "by plundering the baggage and the stragglers of the invading army, enriched himself and his associates." Now looked upon as the chief of Sukerchak, he amassed his wealth there. In 1747 he received a gun shot wound in the head, in a fight with some Afghans, of which he died five years later, in 1752, leaving behind four sons, Charat Singh, Dal Singh, Chet Singh and Mangi Singh.

Charat Singh.

Founded
Sukerchakia
m

After the death of Nodh Singh, his son Charat Singh, the grandfather of Ranjit Singh, succeeded to the patrimony. A "Brave Jat Sirdar," as Payne calls him, "who repeatedly distinguished himself in the early struggles with Ahmad Shah¹," he separated himself from the Fyzulpuria misl, raised his strength to 150 horsemen, "took forcible possession of some villages, united with another successful leader like himself, and formed a misl, of which he became the active chief, calling it after the name of his native village," Sukerchak². He made it a rule, not to admit into his misl a man unless he had received the Sikh baptism³. Amir Singh of Gujranwala, another brave and famous Leader and man of means, with whose help Charat Singh had been carrying on his exploits, gave his daughter in marriage to the latter, and soon Charat Singh transferred his head quarters to Gujranwala. This marriage-tie with

1. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 66-67

2. Gordon, 81

3. Kanheya Lal, 'Twarikh-i-Punjab,' p. 119

Amir Singh, whose depredations extended from the banks of the Jhelum to the walls of Delhi, and who "having acquired large territorial possessions in Gujranwala,...was looked upon as the chief man of the district, united the wealth and strength of the two Sardars," and the allied "chiefs, under one banner, headed the confederacy, though Amir Singh, on account of his age, was never able to take a prominent part in its affairs¹".

At this time, a Mughal Faujdar ruled at Emnabad. He was a man of very harsh nature. His Hindu subjects were his main victims, who complained of it to Charat Singh. In the Summer of 1761, when the hateful activities of this Faujdar reached a height, with his 150 horsemen, Charat Singh attacked Emnabad and surrounded the fortress. The fight took place, but before it could prolong, Charat Singh fell upon the Faujdar with ten selected horsemen, and cut him to pieces. Charat Singh carried away from here, a huge booty and munitions from the Faujdar's arsenel.

attacked
Emnabad.

The name of Charat Singh now spread all around. In the same year, to meet his wants, in place of the Katchi Sarae he possessed in Gujranwala, he built a mud fort². Khawaja Ubed, the governor of Lahore had for sometimes been feeling restive at the rising power of this young Sikh chief, and in 1760, he marched a strong force upon Gujranwala. Charat Singh had foreseen this development, and therefore he was not taken unaware. In the battle Charat Singh's forces completely

Khawaja
Ubed

Marched
upon
Gujranwala

1. Latif, p. 338

2. See Munshi Shahmat Ali, p. 51. Latif says that the fort was built in 1777. But this seems to be a misprint. Because he himself writes that Charat Singh died in 1774.

was
defeated.

After
Abdali

Against
Jammu,

was killed

routed the invading army, and Ubed Khan narrowly escaped with his life, leaving his "military stores and ammunition in the hands of the enemy¹".

In 1762, Charat Singh plundered Abdali's camp, and soon after his retreat, he captured Wazirabad, Ahmadabad, Rohtas, Dhanni, Chakwal, Jalalpur, Pind Dadan Khan, Kot Sahib Singh and Raja-ka-kot etc. This aroused the jealousy of other Sikh misls, particularly of the Bhangis.

Charat Singh marched upon Jammu in 1774. Raja Ranjit Deo of Jammu wanted to deprive his eldest son Brij Raj Deo from succession after his death, in favour of his youngest son Mian Dalel Singh. Charat Singh espoused the cause of Brij Raj, who had rebelled against his father. Ranjit Deo had called to his aid the Bhangis under Jhanda Singh, at the time the most powerful of all the Sikh Sirdars². He was also joined by Chamba, Kangra, Nurpur and Bashahir, while the Kanheyas under Sardar Jai Singh took sides with the Sukerchakias. The rival armies encamped within a few miles of each other on the Basanti river, and preparations were being made for battle, when Charat Singh was killed by the bursting of his own matchlock. This event would probably have given the victory to Ranjit Deo, had it not been counter balanced, on the following day, by the assassination of the Bhangi Chief, Jhanda Singh. The deaths of the two leaders brought about a cessation of hostilities, and the Sikh forces withdrew to their respective districts, leaving Ranjit Deo and his son to settle their quarrel as best as they could³."

1. Latif, p. 339.

2. Payne, p. 67.

3. Ibid.

Maha Singh.

This event took place in 1774. Charat Singh left a large territory to his young son Maha Singh, then only ten years¹ old, whose mother Desan took charge for him during his minority. Sikh "ladies played an important part in the history of these warlike times" and Desan "ruled with vigour and diplomacy".² She was a shrewd and courageous woman, who ruled the misl with tact and ability."³ She rebuilt the fort of Gujranwala, which had been destroyed by Abdali and also got the friendship between Ganda Singh Bhangi and Maha Singh, restored. In 1780 Maha Singh cut his "leading-strings and took the field at the head of his misl, to follow in his father's victorious steps."⁴ Maha Singh had married Raj Kaur-Mai Malwain or Malwa Mother the daughter of Gajpat Singh of Jind, who in 1780, became the mother of our famous Maharaja, Ranjit Singh.

Desan conducted affairs.

The Capture of Rassul Nagar

The first important exploit of Maha Singh was against Rassul Nagar. Situated on the east Bank of Chenab, Rassul Nagar was occupied by a Muslim tribe named Chattas. Its ruler Pir Mohammed is said to have been a sworn enemy of the Hindus, and no trader, a merchant or even a way farer could pass this way without paying a price to him. Maha Singh had heard of it and towards the close of the year 1778, assisted by Jai Singh Kanehya, Maha Singh marched on Rassul

Pir
Mohammed

1. See, Cunningham, 'History of the Sikhs'; Forster, 'Travels,' i, p. 288; Moorcroft, Travels, p. 127; Latif, p. 344. It is wrong that Maha Singh was born in 1760, as M' Gregor suggests (*History of the Sikhs*, i, p. 150).

2. Gordon, p. 82.

3. Payne, p. 68.

4. Gordon, pp. 82-83.

Maha Singh
attacked
Russul
Nagar.

occupied
Alipur.

Maha Singh
captured
Bhangi
territories.

Nagar at the head of about 6,000 troops. The town was besieged and the blockade continued for full four months, ushering in the new year, 1779 as well. The blockade is said to have been so complete and perfect that not a grain of wheat could pass into the town.

All the surrounding country was depopulated. The people inside the town began to starve. Pir Mohammed's appeals to Bhangis went in vain, no help was forthcoming from this side and finally Pir Mohammed had to shut himself up in his fort. The siege of the fort now started and it culminated in the Muslim chief surrendering himself to the Sikh chief along with his family on the condition of a good treatment.¹ Rassul Nagar was occupied by the Sikhs and its name changed to Ramnagar. Dal Singh, a lieutenant of Maha Singh was appointed as the governor of this place. The fame of Maha Singh, as a result of this victory, began to spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, and many sardars who had so far been the dependents of the Bhangi misl, began to transfer their allegiance to him. At this time Maha Singh also conquered Alipur, and changed its name to Akalgarh.

The Bhangi power had been broken as a result of the invasion of Timur Shah, the son of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Bhangis had been expelled from Multan and Bhawalpur. When the forces of Timur Shah retreated, Maha Singh decided to take advantage of the weak position of these chiefs. Pindi Bhattian was pillaged. Sahiwal was attacked, and Jhang was sacked and Isa

1. Here Latif writes:- "Maha Singh put his seal on the Granth, binding himself not to molest Pir Mohamed if he surrendered his person. The Mohamedan chief, on receiving this assurance, came out unguarded, but was treacherously put under arrest by Maha Singh. His sons were tied to the mouths of guns and blown to plunder". This fact, however, is not confirmed by other writers. See Princep-'Origin of the Sikh power', p. 33.

Khel and Musa Khel were captured. All these territories belonged to Bhangis and the weak charactered misaldar Desa Singh, having failed to protect these territories, invited Sahib Singh Bhangi, his brother-in-law and the son of Gujar Singh Bhangi—one of the three occupants of Lahore—to his help. But before Sahib Singh could come to Desa Singh's aid, he fell out with his own younger brother Sukha Singh. Sahib Singh rather requested Maha Singh for help and with this help, he attacked and killed Sukha Singh. This infuriated Gujar Singh, who crossed the Ravi and the Chenab, and marched his forces on Gujrat, the possession of Sahib Singh. Gujrat was finally captured by him. But the son sought the forgiveness of his father and moved with paternal affection, Gujar Singh had to pardon Sahib Singh. All these developments did help Maha Singh escape the trouble at the Bhangi hands.

Next victim of the rising ambition of Maha Singh was **Kotli**, in the neighbourhood of Sialkot. A heavy indemnity was realised from the inhabitants of the place. Maha Singh, writes Latif, after this, under the pretence of holding an important consultation, "invited a very large number of sardars; and upon their complying with his invitation, seized and imprisoned twenty two of the principal chiefs among them. Charat Singh, Kalalwala, Dia Singh, nephew of Sahib Singh, Dhanna Singh and Mihan Singh Wadaha were of the number thus apprehended. These sardars obtained their release only on payment of heavy nazranas according to their rank and wealth.¹"

Attacked
Kotli.

Quarrel with Jammu.

Ranjit Deo of Jammu had died and his son Brij Deo who succeeded him, was incapable of conducting himself efficiently. He had put his younger brother

Helped
Brij Deo

1. Latif, p. 342.

Mian Dalel Singh, behind the bars, and due to his ill-treatment had alienated almost all the nobles. Taking advantage of his weak position, Bhangis took possession of some of his outlying territories. The Jammu ruler made an appeal to Jai Singh and Hakikt Singh Kanheyas for help, with whose help he was actually able to reconquer Karianwala, one of the territories he had lost to the Bhangis. But soon after, we learn, the Kenheya chiefs went over to the Bhanigs and helped the Bhangis not only to re-occupy Karianwala, but along with them, they also planned a march direct upon Jammu. Brij Deo, on this, appealed to Maha Singh, with whom he had already exchanged turbans as a token of everlasting friendship¹, for assistance. "Maha Singh eagerly welcomed the chance of a conflict with his hereditary foes, and set out for Jammu with all the troops he could muster." The powerful combination of his enemies, however, "was more than Maha Singh could with-stand: his forces were defeated, while Brij Raj was compelled to pay tribute to the victorious misls.²"

Defeated.

Attacked
Jammu

About six months after this, however, when Brij Deo refused to pay tribute, the Kanheya chiefs invited Maha Singh to join them in raiding Jammu. Forgetting his pledge of friendship with the Jammu ruler, and with an eye on the riches of that country which had been amassed their due to the diversion thither of the trade flowing sometime through the Punjab plains, due to unsettled conditions in the Punjab, he signified his readiness to join. Hearing of this, Brij Deo fled to Trikoti Devi mountains. Maha Singh, on this side, bent upon playing a diplomacy, lost no time in making preparations, and before the Kanheyas could appear

1. See Payne, p. 68.

2. *Ibid.* 8.

on the scene, he marched on Jammu. Principal inhabitants of the town came out with rich presents to the Sukerchakia chief, but not satisfied, he sacked the town and utterly plundered the surrounding villages. This enraged Jai Singh Kanheya and Hakikat Singh died shortly after this affair, and the thirst for revenge died with him.

Conflict with the Kanheyas.

Jai Singh Kanheya had, a paramount influence in the Punjab. Having taken Maha Singh, the son of Charat Singh Sukerchakia, under his protection, he aided the young chief in capturing Rassulnagar on the Chenab, from a Mahomedan family. But as Maha Singh's reputation increased, about 1785, he threw off his dependence upon Jai Singh so far as to interfere in the affairs of Jammu on his own account. His increasing wealth and the independence he had shown both roused the anger of Jai Singh¹. When Maha Singh visited Amritsar on the Dewali of 1784, and approached the Kanheya chief with sweetmeats, he was insulted by Jai Singh Kanheya with the words. "Go away, you Bhagta (dancing boy); I do not want to hear your sentimental talk". "This was too much to be borne in silence by so haughty and impervious a young chief as Maha Singh was"². "The spirit of the young chief being fired, he went away resolved to appeal to arms. He immediately invited Jasa Singh Ramgarhia who, his trans Sutlej territories having been captured by the Kanheyas, had fled across the Sutlej. He was only too glad to avail of this opportunity. Maha Singh also easily procured the aid of Sansar Chand Katoch of Kangra. Before the aid of Sansar Chand and the Ramgarhia chief could however reach, already

Jai Singh's
jealously

Maha Singh
insulted

Jai Singh
defeated

1. See Cunningham, History of the Sikhs.

2. Latif 343.

Gurbux
Singh
killed.

some actions had been fought between the Sukerchakias and the Kanheyas, and the latter had occupied some territories of Maha Singh. After this, however, when the allied forces fell upon Jai Singh at Batala, the Kanheya forces were completely routed. Gurbux Singh Kanheya, the eldest son of Jai Singh, was killed, and the spirit of the old man was effectually humbled by this double sorrow. He was forced to restore to the Sukerchakias and the Ramgarhias all their possessions. Sansar Chand got the fort of Kangra, upon which his father and grand father had set their eyes for long.

Jai Singh
defeated
again.

Soon however, with the determination to take vengeance on Maha Singh, Jai Singh recollected his spirit, and collecting the remnants of his troops, attacked Maha Singh at Naushera. But he was repulsed with a heavy loss, and fled to Nurpur, "where he shut himself up on the approach of the enemy."

Betrothal
of Mehtab
Kaur,
with Ranjit

Sada Kaur, the widow of Gurbux Singh and prudent and sagacious lady, proposed there at the betrothal of Mehtab Kaur, her only daughter to Ranjit Singh, "the young son of Maha Singh, hoping thereby to unite the Sukerchakia and Kanheya families in a permanent bond of friendship and thus to secure for herself the sardari of the Kanheya misl upon the demise of her father in-law.¹" "This union proved very fortunate for the interest of the country, Maha Singh's reign in the Panjab, for many years after this marriage, being one of peace and prosperity²".

Although the remaining seven or eight years of Maha Singh's career were devoted by him to the extension of his influence, his life was generally that of peace, till 1792. It was in 1792 that Maha Singh entered once again

1. Latif, 344. According to Payne, however, it was a sort of penalty that Maha Singh imposed upon the Kanheya chief, p. 60.

2. Ibid 344.

into a major game, but before he could get the stipulated prize, his destiny laid violent hands upon him and cut short his life. The occasion arose when the question of succession to Gujar Singh Bhangi's estate was to be decided. Gujar Singh had two sons Sahib Singh, the eldest and Fateh Singh the youngest. Although Maha Singh had given formerly his sister in marriage to Sahib Singh, the latter was his most formidable opponent, and therefore he decided to support the younger brother. A war was declared against Sahib Singh and Maha Singh demanded Gujrat to be ceded to him. Maha Singh marched upon the town, Sahib Singh shut himself up in the Sodhra fort, which was besieged. The blockade continued for three months, and the victory was at sight, when unfortunately, Maha Singh's illness became serious. He had remained in a state of delirium tremens for long during the siege. When, at the end of three months, his condition worsened, he had to be removed to Gujranwala and the siege raised. Shortly after this he died.

Marched
upon
Gujrat,

Died 1792

When Maha Singh died in 1792, he was a young man of only twenty seven summers. "Brave, enterprising and prudent beyond his years," as Latif writes of him, he had lived a very stormy life. Had he lived a few years more he might perhaps have accomplished much of that which later, his son Ranjit Singh did. But this was not to be. "He left to his son and successor a state beset by danger; but he bequeathed to him at the same time the qualities by which dangers are best over-come — courage combined with a natural genius for command, and enterprise tempered by prudence and foresight.¹".

1. Payne, pp. 69-70.

Born
1780.

His mother
and Lakha-
pat Rai

CHAPTER II. RANJIT SINGH AND HIS TIMES.

A—Early Life.

It has been almost agreed that Ranjit Singh was born on November, 2, 1780.¹ Maha Singh had died young, writes M' Gregor. "Thus leaving his son, a boy of eight years of age, in the hands of his mother and the Dewan, and under the control of his mother-in-law Sada Kaur, one of the most artful and ambitious women who figure in Sikh History²". This however, seems to be wrong. The accepted date of Maha Singh's death is 1792³, and if Ranjit Singh was born in 1780, in which there seems to be no doubt, he was 12 years of age when his father died.

Be that as it may, there is no doubt that when his father died, Ranjit Singh was a boy of only tender age, and being yet too young to rule, the affairs of his State fell to his mother and Dewan Lakhpat Rai. Ranjit Singh was unfortunate in this regard that he did not have a

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1. See M' Gregor, 'History of the Sikhs', i.p. 164; Lepel Griffin, 'Ranjit Singh', p. 125; Payne, 'A short History of the Sikhs', p. 71; Kanheya Lal, 'Tarikh-i-Punjab', p. 126; Latif, 'History of the Punjab', p. 341; Von Carls, 'Travel in India, Sindh and the Punjab', i.p. 164. Besides the same date is mentioned by Munshi Shahmat Ali and Giani Gian Singh. The most reliable proof may be the inscription found outside a room in the Haveli of Maha Singh at Gujranwala, the place where Ranjit Singh is said to have been born. The inscription reads, 'Maharaja Ranjit Singh Born 2nd. November 1780. Jai Viladat Ranjit Singh Sahib Bahadur. Tarikh Viladat 2 November, 1780'.
 2. M' Gregor, i. pp. 152—153.
 3. See Payne, p. 70; Latif, p. 344.

mother like that of Shivaji, who could inspire him into greatness. Nor could his tutors, Bhai Phagan Singh, and Daula Singh educate him in three Rs, because from his very childhood, he had been interested more in good marks manship than in books. "All the knowledge he gained in his childhood related to field sports and the art of war, in both of which he displayed, the daring ability which marked his subsequent career¹". Later when Wade visited Lahore, the Maharaja himself told him, that when his father died, he left 20,000 rounds of shot which he expended in firing at Marks². Ranjit Singh's father, Maha Singh had high opinion regarding his son. Ranjit Singh had accompanied him on several expeditions and seeing his courage and aptitude, he once had remarked that "The State of Gujranwala will not be a sufficient kingdom for my brave son Ranjit Singh. He will one day carve out a great empire for himself".

Ranjit Singh had an attack of small-pox when he was only a child. Although he survived the attack, yet it left on his body permanent marks and deprived him of one eye. A writer amusingly remarked, "The Almighty deprived the Maharaja of one of his eyes, so as to see the people of the different religions under his control with the very eye".

Small-pox.

"The one-eyed boy grew up short of stature, and as chief of a Misl he seemed what might be called a "sport" among the Stalwart Jats who surrounded him³". Baron Van Hugel, a traveller, who visited his court, drew a pen-sketch of his personality. He writes, the left eye of Ranjit Singh, "Which is quite closed, disfigures him less than the other, which is always rolling about vide open and is much distorted by disease. The scars of the smallpox on his face do not run into one another but

His
personality

1. Payne, 71.

2. Wade's letter, 31st May, 1931.

3. Gordon, 'The Sikhs', p. 83.

form so many dark pits in his grayish-brown skin; his short nose is swollen at the tip; the skinny lips are stretched tight over his teeth which are still good..... but as soon as he mounts his horse and with his black shield at his back puts him on his mettle, his whole form seems animated by the spirit within, and assumes a certain grace of which nobody could believe it susceptible. In spite of the paralysis affecting one side, he manages his horse with the utmost ease."

Of him, writes Griffin, "Ranjit Singh although short of stature and disfigured by that cruel disease was the beau ideal of soldier, strong, spare, active, courageous, and enduring. An excellent horseman, he would remain the whole day in the saddle without showing any sign of fatigue. His love for horses amounted to a passion¹".

very
courageous

Several stories are told regarding courage, fortitude, and the presence of mind of Ranjit Singh as a young boy. Hashmat Khan, the Chatta Chief, whose possession lay on the banks of Chenab, felt jealous of the rising power of this young chief, and once when he was returning from a hunting excursion on a horse back², the Chatta chief, who was "concealed in ambush on the way" undertook a hazardous task, "suddenly sprang up and attacked the youthful sportsman. The blow missed him, and struck the bridle, which it severed in two. Ranjit Singh, coming up on his guard, fell violently on his intended assassin, and with one blow of the sword severed his head from his body. On the death of their chief, the Chattas submitted to Ranjit Singh, who

1. Griffin, pp. 89-90.

2. See Chopra, G. L., 'Punjab as Sovereign State', p. 11; Latif, p. 348; Sir Lepel Griffin seems to be wrong that Ranjit Singh at this time was riding an Elephant. See his 'The Punjab Chiefs.'

annexed a great portion of the estates of the deceased to his own¹.

Ranjit Singh had been betrothed to Mehtab Kaur, the daughter of the Kanheya chief Gurbux Singh and his wife Sada Kaur, in 1785, when he was only five years of age. Ranjit Singh married in 1796, and having no good moral influence of his mother, before assuming the direct responsibilities of administration, he spent his days in hunting, indulging in every kind of excesses and gratifying his youthful passions and desires.²

He was only 17, when he decided to assume the powers directly. His Government at that time is said to have been very unpopular. Sada Kaur was trying to use the influence of Ranjit Singh as a ladder to realise her own political ambitions. And his mother Raj Kaur and the Dewan, Lakhpat Rai, were too much buried in romance to think of the State Administration³. To regain the lost moral prestige, it is said, he brought up a case of conspiracy against Lakhpat Rai, and did a short work of him. Next he imprisoned his own mother, says Principe. But Captain Murray writes that "He dismissed the Dewan and caused his mother to be assassinated".

Major Carmichael, Smyth, Principe and some other European writers, seem to agree with this view. "These conclusions are not, however, warranted by the recorded evidence in our possession," says N. K. Sinha.

Be that as it may, Ranjit Singh assumed a direct control of his administration at an early age of 17, and appointing Dal Singh, his father's maternal uncle, his Prime Minister, started his political career forthwith.

Married in
1796.

Direct
control at
seventeen

1. Latif, p. 348.

2. See M'Gregor, i.p. 153; Latif, pp. 346-7.

3. 'Ranjit Singh', pp. 8-9.

B—Punjab on the eve of Ranjit Singh's Accession.

A chaos.

All that was beautiful in Punjab, wrote principe, had died before Ranjit Singh was born. And it is a fact that when he acceded to power, chaos and confusion ruled supreme. The time of Ranjit Singh's accession to power is one perhaps of the darkest periods in the History of the Punjab.

Disintegration of the Mughal Empire, and repeated invasions of Ahmed Shah Abdali created chaos, and benefiting out of this, different ambitious Sikh Chiefs had carved out different principalities for themselves at different places. When Ranjit Singh acceded to power, there were in Punjab, twelve small Sikh states, or misls, as they were called, one of which was the Sukerchakiya to which he himself belonged. Besides, there were seven small Muslim States, one small Hindu State and several very petty principalities which dotted the map of the Punjab. Most of these powers, however, were weak, and they presented the picture similar to that of Heptarchy in England, immediately after Anglo-Saxons had established themselves in the country. A brief history of the facts regarding them will justify the remarks.

Punjab divided

I—The Misls

The Misls which existed in Punjab, at the time of Ranjit Singh's accession to power, had been organized during the period of confusion and anarchy that prevailed from 1752 to 1761. And "It must be remembered that these Misls were not deliberately devised or knowingly adopted at one particular time, but were on the other hand, gradually evolved to most certain exigencies of the time"

Their character.

"Any effective fighting machine must have a single controlling hand, whereas the Sikh doctrines of brotherhood and equality made every chief kick at the idea of

subordination. It may be observed generally that where there is theoretical equality, the individual interprets that as meaning that he is as good as his neighbour, but his neighbour is not as good as he. So the chiefs had their followers, but every chief was reluctant to own a superior. Therefore the members of the 'Misl's' were hard fighters very difficult to cope with individually, but at the same time very difficult to organize collectively¹.

The Khalsa was not a Languid body. The existence of the common danger from beyond the North-West Frontiers, and internally from the disintegrating Mughal power, had kept them together. But after the year 1783, not much was to be apprehended from the North-West, and within the Punjab, the Mughal power had already been thrown into the dust-bin of History.

Khalsa not languid

Gurmata, or the General Central Assembly of the Misl's was a "curious mixture of Theocracy Democracy and Absolutism."¹ Yet considered separately, it was none of them. It had already lived the purpose for which it had been organised. Belief in one God, was now not as much a binding force among the Sardars as in the troublous times it was. The community of faith weakened with the development of personal political ambitions among them. That political brotherhood which had brought them together, had now faded and attendance of the General Assembly became poorer. The religious inspiration having slackened, the only binding force among them now was the common lust for power, but this in turn, brought among them, mutual jealousies and a struggle for ascendancy, as for instance between Bhangis and the Kanheyas. The powerful Sardars wanted to establish their supremacy over the weak ones, which made the latter to seek alliances and protection of those in whom they had faith. But

Gurmata

Political brotherhood

Mutual jealousy

1. Sir Charles Gough, 'The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars', p. 28.

2. Ibbetson—Glossary of Castes and Tribes.

Alliances

political faith is always a pail without its bottom. Moreover, the system of political alliances brought deeper division among the Sardars, and this coupled with the question of personal glory and power, made confusion worse confounded. Nor was the common man in different Misls, satisfied. After a long period of confusion and chaos, he now wanted protection and security and this could be given only by a strong unified monarchy in the Punjab¹.

Common man

Predictions

As early as in 1783, Froster had predicted that "we may see some ambitious chief led on by his genius and success, and absorbing the power of his associates, display from the ruins of the commonwealth, the standard of monarchy". Similar views had been expressed by Warran Hastings in 1784. And this was correct. When Ranjit Singh acceded to power, the theocratic Commonwealth of the Sikhs was in ruin and among the individual misls, none was strong enough to challenge Ranjit Singh's power. Nor was there any other power in Punjab which could be a source of any serious menace to Ranjit Singh. The circumstances in which he was born and acceded to power, were thus conducive to the development of his political ambition, as it will be further clarified in the short account that follows.

The Bhangi Misl

Founder
Chajja
Singh.
Hari Singh

The most important misl on the North-West of the river Sutlej was Bhangi Misl. The Bhangi's took their name from their enslavement to bhang, an intoxicating preparation of hemp. The confederacy was founded by Chajja Singh. Their famous leader was Hari Singh, who with his brother Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh, making his head-quarters in Amritsar, had overrun the neighbouring country and captured and held the city of Multan for several years². At the time of Ranjit Singh's accession

1. See Griffin, pp. 83—85.

2. See Griffin, p. 79.

to power, the Bhangis still held the important cities of Lahore, Amritsar, Gujrat, and Sialkot. But the Bhangi leaders at this time, were no match to Ranjit Singh. Gulab Singh Bhangi, the most important of them was said to have been too romantic to challenge seriously the rising star. Sahib Singh, the second important leader, whose career had been hitherto marked by energy and enterprise, now became an indolent debauchee and drunkard. He quarrelled with the rival chiefs and Sardars, and, his power being weakened, Ranjit Singh could seize upon all his possessions. Nor were Lehna Singh and Gujar Singh of Lahore strong enough for the job. Invasions of Zaman Shah had weakened them. And tired of their tyranny and mismanagement, the leading citizens of Lahore themselves, according to one account, sent a petition to Ranjit Singh inviting him to come and occupy the city, promising him every help they could give.

The Ahluwalia Misl.

Nor was the Ahluwalia Misl, though big enough and strong enough, a source of any serious menace to him. The Ahluwalia misl had derived its name from the village Ahlu, five kos to the east of Lahore. Its founder was one Sadhu Singh, a jat of the Kalal or distiller caste. But the true founder of the confederacy was Jassa Singh. "Fifth in the descent from Sadhu, who was born in 1718 ten years after the death of Guru Govind Singh." When the boy was five years old, Badr Singh, his father died and his widow mother is said to have taken the boy to Mai Sundri, "Widow of Guru Govind Singh.....and the Mai blessed the little boy, and presented him with a silver mace, predicting that he would have mace-bearers to attend them". "The boy soon rose a distinction and was a man of great ability and a successful general in the field. Though never acknowledged by the Sikhs generally as their king, yet was invariably entrusted with the command of the combined forces of the confederacies when a

Gulab
SinghSahib
SinghLehna
Singh,
Gujar
SinghFounder
Sadhu
Singh

Jassa Singh

led entire
Khalsa.

Died 1783
Bhag Singh

Fateh
Singh's
friendship

Founder
Khoshal
Singh.

joint action against the enemy was contemplated." His influence among the Sikhs was great, in consequence chiefly of his saintly position and orthodoxy, and the greatest Sardars considered it an honour to be baptized by him. He did more than almost any chief to consolidate the sikh power.

His possessions were chiefly in the tract of country between the rivers Sutlej and Beas¹. But fortunately for Ranjit Singh, he also had died in 1783. He was succeeded by his second cousin, Bhag Singh. He, however, quarrelled with Bhangis and Ramgharias. The Ramgarhia chief, Jassa Singh, allying himself with Sansar Chand Katoch of Kangra, had routed the Ahluwalia forces in 1801, under Hamir Singh. Bhag Singh's own march against the enemy also failed, as he fell ill during the march, and soon after died, leaving his only son, Fateh Singh to succeed him.

Under these circumstances, naturally therefore, when Fateh Singh succeeded to the chiefship of his Misl, he was anxious to form an offensive and defensive alliance with Ranjit Singh. The two young chiefs exchanged turbans, and swore perpetual friendship on the sacred Granth. Although this friendship was signed on the basis of equality, in practice, the diplomatic genius, Ranjit Singh, permitted him to play only a subservient part and used him rather as a stepping stone for the development of his power.

THE RAMGARHIA MISL

The Ramgarhia misl shared the city of Amritsar and the neighbouring districts with the Kanheyas. The Misl had been founded by Khoshal Singh, a Jat of Mauza Guga, in the vicinity of Amritsar. He was a follower of Banda Beragi, from whom he took pahul. After his death

1. Griffin 78—79;
Latif, 313—316.

Nodh Singh succeeded and after Nodh Singh, Jassa Singh came to power. A very daring and intrepid young man, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, alongwith the Kanheyas, had plundered the Durani camps, ravaged the country far and wide to crush the Muslim power, established military posts and built forts when Khwaja Ubed, the Lahore Governor, had attacked the Sikh fort at Gujranwala. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia played an important part in the battle against the enemy, and a large portion of guns, ammunition and treasures, fell to him, after the enemy had been routed. When driven by the Kanheyas across the river Sutlej, he ravaged the country upto Delhi and on one occassion he penetrated into the very heart of that city, carrying away four guns from the Mughal quarter. He was paid a tribute by the Governor of Meerut. Later, with Maha Singh's help, his trans Sutlej territories were restored to him, although there could be no lasting friendship between Ramgarhia and the Sukerchakias. Jasa Singh Ramgarhia was a brave and courageous leader, and he could be an effective hinderance in the way of Ranjit Singh. But here again, fortunately for Ranjit Singh, when he tried to expand his territory, Jasa Singh was an old man, too weak to challenge the Sukerchakia chief. Jasa Singh died in 1816, and was succeeded by his son Jodh Singh. But Jodh Singh was a man of no ambition and activity. His cousin, Dewan Singh, soon encroached upon his territories, and occupied an important part of them. Jodh Singh's son Hira Singh, also proved to be an incompoop., and his possessions were easily seized by Ranjit Singh.

Jassa Singh

Khwaja
UbedAn old
man.
Successors
weak.

The Kanheyas

The Kanheya Misl which was as important as the Bhangis had been, possessed large parts of the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur. The Misl had been founded by Jai Singh, who came from the Mauza Kanha, 15 miles east of Lahore, from which the Misl got its name.

Founder
Jai Singh
of Kanha.

Jai Singh had been a very powerful and influential chief and it was under his guardianship that Maha Singh, the father of Ranjit Singh had grown to power. Later, however, Jai Singh became jealous of the growing wealth and influence of Maha Singh and fell out with him, but was defeated and the widow of his son Gurbux Singh, who had been killed in the battle, proposed the betrothal of her only daughter, Mehtab Kaur, to Ranjit Singh, and thus matrimonial relation between the two misls was established. After the death of Jai Singh, Sada Kaur succeeded to the headship of her Misl. "She was a masterful, unscrupulous, and ambitious woman; but she possessed both courage and ability, and on several occasions proved herself a valuable ally to her youthful son-in-law. Her real aim was to render the whole of the Punjab subject to her own dominion; and she sought by keeping Ranjit Singh under her control, to make his power subservient to her plans. But she mistook both the nature and the capabilities of his son-in-law. The Lion of the Punjab had no intention of becoming a stepping-stone for others, and Sada Kaur soon found that the role she had designed for him was the very one she was destined to play herself¹".

Sada Kaur,
stepping
stone

Singhpuria

To the rest of the Misls, only a passing reference may be made. Singh puria Misl held portions of Ludhiana, Jullundur, Nurpur, and some north-western part of the Ambala District. Once this confederacy was important, and its founder Kapur Singh, played a very important part in the early political history of the Sikhs. He had captured from Faizulla Khan, the village and district of Faizullapur, near Amritsar, which was given by him the name of Singh Pura, after which the Misl itself began to be known as Singhpuria. When, however, he died in 1753 he left no successor competent to bear his name and

¹ Payne, pp. 72—73.

fame. Though his nephew Khushal Singh and his descendants kept possessions of the territory, they were unimportant and weak.

Nishanias, who get their name from Nishan or banner of the Khalsa, possessed Ambala, Liddran, Shahbad, Amloh, and some other territories. Jai Singh had been its most important chief and now it was a power of no importance.

Nishanias

Karor Singhias, getting their name from Karora Singh, held territories chiefly between the Mukanda and Jamna rivers. It was also unimportant.

Karor
Singhias

The Shahids were rather religious than military leaders. The founder of the Misl was one Sudda Singh, the mahant of the Gurdwara at Talwandi, or Damdama, where Guru Govind Singh had made his resting-place. "He was killed fighting against the Mohammadan governor of Jullundur and his head having been struck off he is reported to have ridden some distance and killed several of the enemy before he fell from his horse. Hence he was known as the martyr (shahid), and his followers took his name¹." The Misl held some estates about Rania, Khari and Jaroli but was unimportant.

Shahids

Nakkais held the Nakka country between Gogaira and Lahore. Dulewalia Misl was founded by Tara Singh of the village Dulewal, and possessed northern parts of Ludhiana and Ambala, some territory in Ferozepur and major portion of the upper Jullundur Doab. But these powers again, were small and could be easily dealt with.

Nakkais
Dulewalias

The Phulkian Misl

The strongest power in the cis-Sutlej regions was the Phulkian Misl. The founder of the Misl was one Phul, a jat of Sindhu tribe, "thirtieth in descent from Jesal, the founder of the family, and the state and city of Jesalmir,

Founder
Phul

1. Griffin, pp. 82—83.

Seven sons

in Rajputana." Phul founded a village at a distance of five miles from Mauza Bedowali or Mehraj, and named it Phul after his own name. Guru Her Govind had prophesied that Phul would some day become a great man. And this proved to be correct. "Phul had seven sons who became ancestors of the reigning families of Patiala, Jind and Nabha, called after his name the Phulkians. The houses of Bhador, Malod, Landgarhia, and the family of Jiandau, sprang from his issue, and attained to great wealth and power¹." At the time of Ranjit Singh's succession to power, however the Phulkian chiefs had been considerably weakened by their mutual jealousies and warfare. Sahib Singh, the ruler of the Patiala house, was the most powerful among them, but he was an unambitious man and an inefficient ruler. Nor did he have a peace in his domestic life. He had a quarrel with his own queen, Aus Kaur, which rather led the latter to invite Ranjit Singh to decide their domestic quarrel.

Sahib Singh
of Patiala

Multan

Kasur

Other territories

II—The Muslim Chiefs

Besides the Sikh Misls there were some territorial units in the Punjab, which were in the hands of the Muslim chiefs. Multan was being governed by Sadozai chief, Muzaffar Khan, whose father, Shuja Khan, claimed a common descent with Ahamed Shah Abdali. His ancestors had come from Kandhar, and in the confusion which followed the accession of Nadir Shah to the Kabul throne, they occupied Multan.

Twenty five kos south-east of Lahore, Kasur, the pathan stronghold was governed by Nizamud-din, an ambitious Muslim chief. Dera Ghazi Khan, including Bhawalpur, was ruled by Bhawal Khan Daudpotra. Jhang was under the control of Ahmed Khan Sial. Peshawar was in the hands of Fateh Khan Barakzai, who acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of Mahmud Shah, and Kashmir was

1. Latif, p. 325.

in the hands of his brother Azim Khan. The fort of Attok was in the hands of Jehandad Khan, the chief of Wazir Khels. Other independent chiefs were those of Dhani, Khushab, Wazirabad and Pakpattan. Pakpattan was the seat of the shrine of Baba Farid, in whose honour it is said:—

"As long as the earth and the world endure, so long may the country of Pakpattan flourish. For in its environs, which resemble paradise, rests the Saint Sheikh Baba Farid¹."

Bannu, Kohat, Sialkot, Dera Ismail Khan and Chiniot were also held by the Muslims. Tank was in the hands of Sarwer Khan Kuttii Khel. All these powers were hostile powers. But on the whole, among them as well, none was formidable enough to be a source of any danger to Ranjit Singh.

None for-
midable

III—The Hills

The plains thus presented to Ranjit Singh, a "gradual and easy means by which the whole might be enveloped within his supremacy." But in the hill regions the things were different. There were many petty chiefs in these regions, who had their own ambitions to expand. The more important of them were the chiefs of Suket, Mandi, Kulu, Basoli, Chamba, Nurpur, Jammu and Kangra. The chief of Kangra, Sansar Chand Kutoch, among them, was the most ambitious man, and he was developing his sway over the rest of them. This could be a possible source of menace to Ranjit Singh, but here too fortunately for him, the things turned out to be rather in his favour.

Sansar
Chand

By developing his hold over the petty chiefs of hill, Sansar Chand made things rather easier for Ranjit Singh. For now if Ranjit Singh wanted to occupy hill regions, he could do so by settling his affairs with Sansar Chand

Things
easy

1. Latif, p. 351.

alone. There was no necessity of fighting all the petty chiefs separately and thus wasting time and energy.

IV—Gurkhas

The Gurkhas in Nepal, however, could raise complications for Ranjit Singh. They conquered Kumaon, invaded Sikkim and were threatening Tibet. When defeated by China in 1792, they began their westward advance annexing Garhwal and Kumaon in 1794, and soon their kingdom stretched from Sikkim to the borders of Kashmir, including within it of course Kumaon and the Simla hill States. Bhim Sen Thapa who became Prime Minister of the country early in the 19th century, was a man of very high ambitions. He was not satisfied with the territories that he already had within his state, and it was not after a long time of his succession when he began to aspire for expansion further West. A collision between Nepal and the young state of Ranjit Singh was therefore imminent. But here too, although the situation was more complicated it was not difficult for him to meet it.

V—The English

The English by this time had fought their fateful battle of Plassey and established their full sway on Bengal. Their influence was developing on the adjoining states such as Bihar, Agra and Oudh, and they had already exterminated from active Indian politics the formidable power of France. Yet when Lord Wollesley came in India in 1793, the first problem that he had to face, was the rising power of Marathas. Nizam too was no more friendly towards them. They had yet to occupy Delhi, if they wanted to establish their empire in India and proceed towards Punjab and more, the Sikh States of Malwa had to be conquered if the English wanted to touch the eastern frontiers of Ranjit Singh's State. Ranjit Singh, therefore had no immediate challenge from the English to face.

Bhim Sen
Thapa

Yet to
consolidate

VI—The Marathas

Nor did Ranjit Singh have to meet any challenge from the Marathas. Although by the year 1798, they had huge resources and were controlling practically the whole of Central India, although in 1797, Daulat Rao Sindhia was in the occupation of Delhi and some Maratha chiefs like Dhara Rao had attacked some of the Sikh States of Malwa several times; yet, whatever their ambitions previously might have been, in 1799 they had no ambition to occupy the Punjab.

No ambition

VI—The Afghans

Another possible challenge that Ranjit Singh could have to meet was from Afghanistan. In 1752 once at least Ahmad Shah Abdali had annexed Punjab to his Afghan Raj, but Sikhs had forced him to leave. His son Timur tried to re-occupy the country, but failed. In 1783, Shah Zaman came to power in Afghanistan and by 1795 he had invaded Punjab twice and occupied the territories upto Hassan Abdal. He led his third invasion in 1797, occupied Lahore and appointed Ahmad Khan Shahanchi as its governor, though soon to be pushed aside. In 1798, Shah Zaman led his 4th invasion in Punjab, but fortunately for Ranjit Singh, he had to leave the things in a lurch and hurry back to his country, to suppress the rebellion of his half brother Mahmud Zaman. In haste he lost some of his guns in the rising river Jehlum, which it is said, were dug out for him by Ranjit Singh who in return was granted the legal control of Lahore. The story that Lahore was legally granted to Ranjit Singh may be doubted, but it is sure that at about this time, Ranjit Singh did have a friendly relations with the Afghan Ruler¹.

They helped
Ranjit Singh

There were some small but powerful tribes. Between Jehlum and Indus there were many individual Zamindars

Powerful
tribes.

1. See Infra, p.p 31—33

or warlike clans organised on feudal basis, such as Gakhars of Jehlum, Maliks of Shahpur and Baluchis of Sahiwal. But the total number of their armed retinues, which could be doubled in time of emergency, was not more than 3,000 men.

Lucky

The Punjab was thus a congeries of small states and other warring groups open to the adventures of ambitious man, when Ranjit Singh came to power. He was lucky. His environment shaped his handiwork, "the country—on the line of invasion, the people—a race nurtured in storm¹."

1. Sinha, Ranjit Singh, p. 2.

CHAPTER III

Conquests and Annexations of Ranjit Singh.

A—Before 1805

Immediately after Ranjit Singh assumed power, Zaman Shah, as discussed above, led his fourth invasion into India. During his first three invasions, we do not hear of Ranjit Singh having played any important part against him. But all of a sudden, during his fourth invasion, Ranjit Singh is mentioned in the contemporary records as one of the most important chiefs of the Punjab. The British news-writer at Delhi addressed the authourities at Calcutta just this time thus "Ranjit Singh of Gujrat (it should be Gujranwala) has assembled" about 10/12 thousand horses. He and many other Sardars were attempting to hem in the army of the invader¹." The particular mention of Ranjit Singh's name is noteworthy. Later on, in 1827, Ranjit Singh himself told Wade that during Zaman Shah's occupation of Lahore, every night he used to attack the invader's army, with a handful of Sikh soldiers to harass him.

Zaman
Shah's
fourth
invasion,

Zaman Shah had occupied Lahore, and to meet this danger, it is said, the twelve sikh misls burried their differences and tried to come forward as a united power. But Zaman Shah seems to have been a diplomatic genius and following the later British technique of 'Divide and Rule,' he made his wazir Wafadar Khan try to present Khilats to some important Sikh chiefs. Ranjit Singh was one of those important chiefs whom he succeeded in winning over. But unfortunately for Zaman Shah, in the midst of his victories in Punjab, he was called back

Occupied
Lahore.

1. P. R. C., Vol IX, letter No. 7.

But returned

Appointed Ranjit

Purpose

to Kabul due to the sudden rebellion of his half brother Mahmud. In haste, it is said, he lost many of his important guns in the Jhelum, which at that time was in spate. Ranjit Singh dug them out for him. Zaman Shah knew that Lahore at that time was under the control of Bhangi chiefs, who had fled the city at the time of his invasion, and it was indeed, hold some writers, a master-stroke of his stratagem that as a reward for Ranjit Singh's services he appointed him on his own behalf to the governorship of Lahore. Zaman Shah's purpose was possibly two-fold. Firstly that by this action he might be able to consolidate his half victory on Lahore, and if Ranjit Singh was not too ambitious, he would work in Punjab as his subordinate; and secondly that by appointing Ranjit Singh the governor of Lahore, he would create a definite source of trouble between Ranjit Singh and other sikh chiefs who would naturally be jealous of him, and thus divide them among themselves thus making it easy for him to fish in the troubled water at any time.

But some writers do not subscribe to this view. According to them the people of Lahore had already been tired of the tyrannical rule of the Bangi Sardars and that the latter had made themselves yet more unpopular when they fled the city at the face of Zaman Shah's invasion. The citizens therefore resisted when the Bhangi sardars attempted to re-occupy Lahore after Zaman Shah's retreat and invited Ranjit Singh instead to occupy the city.

The story of Zaman Shah's granting Lahore to Ranjit Singh can not be accepted without reservation. Zaman Shah did lose his guns in the Jhelum river, and Ranjit Singh dug them out for him. Admitted. But there is no

1. See M' Gregor, Vol. I, p. 154.

definite proof that Zaman Shah appointed Ranjit Singh as governor of Lahore in return, or made a grant of the city to him, as some writers hold. The facts that we get from the contemporary British records rather contradict this. Thus a document dated April 1800 reads: "Ranjit Singh has lately delivered to Zaman Shah's vakil 15 pieces of cannon which the Durani prince lost last year in a retreat¹".

It is clear that the guns were returned to Zaman Shah at the earliest, in the beginning of the year 1800, and Zaman Shah could grant Lahore to Ranjit Singh only after that. But we know from the recorded facts that Ranjit Singh had occupied Lahore definitely on 16th July 1799. This may disprove that Ranjit Singh got Lahore as a grant from Zaman Shah. Nor can we overlook the fact that Zaman Shah's victory on Lahore was only perfunctory and that too was lost when he had to retreat in haste. That he granted Lahore to Ranjit Singh when he did not possess it himself, looks meaningless.

We therefore accept the view that the Bhangi rulers of Lahore being oppressive and tyrannical, had fled the city when Zaman Shah invaded, but returned and re-occupied it after his retreat. The leading citizens of Lahore sent a petition to Ranjit Singh inviting him to occupy Lahore, and promising to give him whatever help they themselves could give to the effect. Latif gives the names of some important persons who signed the petition. They were Hakim Hakam Rai, Bhai Gurbaksh Singh, Mian Ashok Mohamad, Mian Mohkam Din, Mohamad Bakar, Mohamad Tahir, Mufti Mohamed Mokarram, and Mir Shadi. The petition was sent to Ranjit Singh 26 days after Zaman Shah's retreat².

Lahore
citizens
invited

Another factor which is said to have led the citizens sign this application was the rumours of the attack upon

1. P. R. C, vol. IX No. 7.

2. Latif, p. 349.

Lahore by Nizamuddin of Kasur. Nizamuddin had already proposed to Zaman Shah to let him occupy Lahore for him, in return for an annual payment of five lakh rupees. But Zaman Shah had refused it.

Beside sending a petition to Ranjit Singh, the citizens also sent a separate petition to Sada Kaur requesting her support for the purpose. Ranjit Singh on receiving the petition, deputed an officer to proceed to Lahore immediately and ascertain if the citizens were serious in their proposal. On the favourable report of this officer, along with Sada Kaur, Ranjit Singh marched to Amritsar at the head of a strong force of 25,000 soldiers, on the pretext of a usual visit to the holy place, wherefrom, in one march, he reached the suburbs of Lahore. On hearing this news, of the three Bhangi rulers, Chet Singh, Sahib Singh and Mohar Singh, who held the city jointly, the latter two fled. Chet Singh prepared to accept the challenge. He was informed that Ranjit Singh was marching upon the Delhi gate of the city, and thither he proceeded forthwith. But on reaching there, he learnt that he had been deceived by his informers, and that Ranjit Singh had rather entered the city through the Lahori gate, the doors of which were opened by the citizens, in complicity with Ranjit Singh. He marched back immediately and reached the gates of the fort just in time, and shut himself up inside it. Had he been late just by a few moments, Ranjit Singh's forces would have entered the fort and the game would have been finished. This incidence, however, did not delay Ranjit Singh's occupation of the fort for long. For the next morning finding the treachery and discord at work amongst the citizens all around him, he surrendered himself to Ranjit Singh, on the condition of a safe conduct and grant of suitable allowance for his family.

Ranjit
marched
with Sada
Kaur

Chet Singh

Surren-
dered,

Ranjit Singh willingly agreed, and treated Chet Singh with consideration. The city was occupied, and orders were issued promising protection to all, and to bring about the normal conditions and a confidence among the people, he made over a large number of unserviceable guns and military stores to the artizans, against handsome payments. "These measures had the desired effect. The people were reassured and in a few days the town became as busy as ever¹."

City occupied

The occupation of Lahore was a great victory for the prince, indeed, and he got it easily too, because in his venture, he was assisted materially by his allies. And then, besides the citizens of Lahore being in favour of his occupation, the Bhangi sirdars themselves were only worthless debauchs. Sunk and engrossed in mutual jealousies and the pleasures of the medieval zenanas their territories were too much scattered under different sardars to come together in the time of emergency. And then Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, the inveterate enemy of Ranjit Singh and Sada Kaur, on whose help indeed, they could count at such a moment, was just too old and infirm to move. Ranjit Singh was lucky².

Peace restored.

Easy victory

Battle of Bhasin, 1800.

The occupation of Lahore is a land-mark in the life and career of Ranjit Singh. It being the political capital of Punjab, its importance at that time could not be exaggerated. Ranjit Singh's occupation of Lahore gave a shock not only to some important sikh chiefs, but also to Nizamuddin of Kasur, who had once already "offered to Zaman Shah to hold the Punjab for him and pay him five lakhs per annum." Zaman Shah refused. When Ranjit Singh occupied Lahore, Nizamuddin also was naturally shocked.

Chiefs shocked

1. Latif 351,

2. See Dr. G. L. Chopra, 'The pb. as a Sovereign State.'

Collected
at Bhasin.

Contracting an alliance with Sahib Singh of Gujrat, Jasa Singh Ramgarhia and Jodh Singh of Wazirabad, Nizamuddin made a common cause with them, and they collected an army at the village Bhæsin, a few miles east of Lahore, under the leadership of Gulab Singh Bhangi of Amritsar.

Ranjit
advanced.

Ranjit Singh also advanced and encamped his forces opposite to those of his enemies. But for two months the things lingered on, and none could dare take initiative in attacking the other. In the meanwhile, to the good luck of Ranjit Singh, mutual jealousies developed in the camp of his enemies, and when in the midst of this confusion, Gulab Singh Bhangi died of the excessive indulgence in Bhang¹, they dispersed forthwith without giving battle to Ranjit. It was indeed a great political and psychological victory for Ranjit Singh, who now found himself definitely on road to creating a standard of monarchy in Punjab. The Sikh chiefs once thus dispersed, could never meet again to challenge his power.

Jodh Singh
defeated
Trium-
phant entry

Near Batala a battle was fought between Sada Kaur and Jodh Singh, son of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. Ranjit Singh aided the former, and the result was the total discomfiture of the Ramgarhias. After these events, Ranjit Singh now lord of Lahore, made his triumphant entry into the city. He was received with great honour by the leading citizens, who presented nazranas and received rich khilats from their new sovereign².

Title of
Maharaja

"A king had now appeared among the lions. Lahore was ever after left in his undisturbed possession. In the following year, 1801, he formally assumed the title of Maharaja, going through the Hindu equivalent of a coronation ceremony, proclaimed that he was now to be styled "Sarkar", signifying power and state, established

1. See Ibrat Nama,
ii, pp. 222-223.

2. Latif, p. 352.

a mint, and issued in token of sovereignty a coin in his name bearing the inscription, 'Hospitality, the sword, victory, and conquest unfailing from Guru Gobind Singh and Nanak.'¹

Coins.

The Sikhs thus, under Ranjit Singh, had now reached nation-hood. The time was not far ahead when Khalsa would be a territorial power and the Afghan flood of invasions would be rolled back across the Indus, thus fulfilling the "prophecy of the martial Guru Govind Singh".

Occupies Some Smaller States.

Before attempting to take revenge against his enemies of Bhasin, Ranjit Singh now decided to occupy some smaller states and consolidate his power. Ranjit Singh had learnt of the riches of the ruler of Jammu, and the finance was what he needed at that time for the construction of his political edifice. He attacked the state, realizing a cash amount of Rs. 20,000 and forcing the chief to be his feudatory. On his way to Jammu, he also conquered Narwal and Mirowal. Dul Singh, the chief of Akalgarh, who in alliance with Sahib Singh of Gujarat was intriguing against Ranjit Singh, was next defeated and taken prisoner in 1801. It was only on mediation of a holy man, Baba Keshra Singh, that the Akalgarh chief was released. But fortunately for Ranjit Singh, again, Dul Singh died shortly after this, and he annexed his state forthwith, leaving a jagir of two villages for his widow.

Attacked
JummuNarwal and
Mirowal

Akalgarh.

After the arrest of Dul Singh, Ranjit Singh had desired also to crush the power of Sahib Singh of Gujarat. But the intervention of some other important person saved the latter. Shortly after, however, Sahib Singh now

Sahib Singh
and Nizam-
uddin.

1. Gordon, 'The Sikhs', p. 86.
2. See M'Gregor, Vol. I, 152—155.

began to intrigue against Ranjit Singh, in alliance with Nizamuddin of Kasur. Ranjit Singh sent an expedition against them, under Fateh Singh Kalianwala. Nizamuddin could save himself only by giving his brother as hostage to the Maharaja but Sahib Singh escaped again. It was later only in 1809, that Sahib Singh was defeated by Fakir Aziz Din and his estates were annexed.

Kangra

Next Ranjit Singh directed his attention towards Kangra, where Sada Kaur was fighting unsuccessfully against the Raja of Noorpur and Sansar Chand Kutoch of Kangra. "The latter fled to his own country on the approach of the Maharajah, and he having taken the fort of Nuoshuhur from the Noorpur Rajah, bestowed it with all its revenues on Sada Koonwur."¹

Fort of Sujanpur

On his return from the hills, Ranjit Singh attacked the fort of Sujanpur near Pathankot, and levelled it to the ground. Budh Singh and Sangat Singh, who held the fort, had carried military exploits all around the territory. From them Ranjit Singh extorted four large pieces of ordnance. Next, establishing his police post at Sujanpur Ranjit Singh captured the neighbouring districts of Dharamkot, Bahrampur and Sukalgarh.

Pindi Bhatian,

From here Ranjit Singh proceeded to Pindi Bhatian, across the river Chenab, took its fort and bestowed it on Fatteh Singh Ahluwalia. From here, he came to the fort of Bund, which he besieged for two months. It was surrendered to Ranjit Singh. Next, a tribute was realised from Zamindars of the Dhanni country, famous for its breed of horses and from here he returned to Lahore with 400 fine horses.

Alliance with Fateh Singh Ahluwalia.

The causes

The interests of Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia at this time were to certain extent common. Sansar Chand of Kangra was considered by Fateh Singh

1. M' Gregor, p. 155.

to be his enemy, and for Ranjit Singh of course he was rival whose influence in the Northern hills must be excluded. Fateh Singh was not on friendly relations with Ramgarhias, and Ranjit Singh too was their enemy for the part they had played against Ranjit Singh in the battle field of Bhasin. Moreover Fateh Singh could count upon Ranjit Singh's help in the suppression of some of his own rebellious vassals. Nor was Sada Kaur friendly towards Ramgarhias or towards Sansar Chand of Kangra. The Bhangi chiefs of Gujrat and Amritsar were considered to be common enemies by all the three—Ranjit Singh, Sada Kaur and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. Clearly thus, their interests to a great extent lay together. Ranjit Singh exchanged turbans with Fateh Singh, at the sacred place of Taran Taran, thus establishing with him a perpetual friendship. Sada Kaur being already with him, thus the resources of the three misls, the Sukerchakia, Kanheya and the Ahluwalia, were pooled together. But Ranjit Singh being the most influential among them, the other two chiefs proved only to be tools which he used to realise his expansionist ambitions.

Conquest of Daska and Chiniot.

After having thus strengthened his hands, Ranjit Singh marched, accompanied by Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, upon Daska. Its fort was reduced. Its killadar having fled, Ranjit Singh established a police post in it.

Ranjit Singh conquered Chiniot, which was being ruled by Jasa Singh, the son of Karam Singh. This was done with the help of his friend Fateh Singh, who was given the territories of Bhattian and Dhana across the Jhelum, as his share. Next the combined forces of the allies marched upon Kasur, Nizamuddin, the ruler of which was said to have plundered some of Ranjit Singh's camel flocks, while he was busy with Chiniot. Nizamuddin after a small resistance paid heavy nazrana to the allies and thus saved his life.

Resources
pooled

Police post
at Daska.

Chiniot,

Kasur

Phagwara

Soon after, Ranjit Singh marched into Jullundur Doab plundering and making annexations. He proceeded to Phagwara in the Doab, which was held by a rich widow of one Chuhar Mal, forced her to retire to Hardwar and occupied her territory, which was bestowed upon Fateh Singh Ahluwalia.

Multan

Then in 1803, Ranjit Singh decided to try his hands against Muzaffar Khan of Multan. But the latter met him at a distance of about 40 miles from Multan and by making large presents made the Maharaja turn back from his territory. Next Ranjit Singh made his power felt in Sahiwal and Gujrat, which belonged to the Kabul kingdom. His next target was Ahmed Khan of Jhang, who was said to have been in league with the Afghan ruler to whom he sent all the important informations regarding Ranjit's activities. After a stiff resistance, Ahmed Khan agreed to pay Ranjit a heavy annual tribute.

In North-West,
Karlan and
Kathia,

Ranjit Singh now advanced in the North-West, upto Rawlpindi, and made the bars of Karlan and Kathia between Ravi and Chenab; the bars of Sahiwal between Chenab and Jhelum; and the regions of Ahmadabad and Khusab, pay him tribute. His next target was Sansar Chand of Kangra who had been trying to occupy Jullundur Doab, after Hoshiarpur and Bijwara fell into his hands. Ranjit expelled him from the latter two places and checked his designs on Jullundur Doab.

Sahiwal,
Ahmadabad
and
Khusab.Sansar
Chand

Amritsar

The most important of his conquests after Lahore was Amritsar, which according to Griffin, Gunningham and Latif was conquered in 1802. But the more reliable account of Sohan Lal who wrote the diary of Ranjit's Darbar says that Amritsar was conquered in 1805. The Bhangi ruler Gulab Singh of Amritsar was one of the chiefs who took part against Ranjit at Bhasin. He had died and his minor son Gurdit Singh was being looked after by his widow Mai Sukhan, who also managed the state affairs. In order to have a pretext for attack Ranjit Singh demanded

the famous gun Zam-Zam, which had been given to his grand father Charat Singh by the Afghan ruler in 1764, but was now in the possession of Mai Sukhan. The latter refused to part with it. Some historians say that had Mai Sukhan heeded the advice of Jodh Singh, the son of Jasa Singh Ramgarhia, and handed over the gun to Ranjit Singh, she would have established friendly relations with him and saved herself like the Ahluwalia sardar. But this is doubtful. Amritsar being the religious capital of sikhs, Ranjit knew that his power would never be consolidated without the occupation of this city. Any way, this pretext worked, Ranjit invaded and occupied the city after a resistance of only two hours, says Sohan Lal. The Bhangi chiefs fled to the protection of Ramgarhia Sardar.

Thus by 1805, Lahore lay prostrate at his feet. Amritsar studded his crown. Kangra, Chiniot, Kasur and Multan were subdued or weakened, and Ranjit Singh with the power of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Sada Kaur at his command was strong enough to enter into bigger games, when his attention was suddenly diverted towards the east, where the English were making their presence felt. There was a lull¹ for sometime, in his violent activities in the Punjab. But this was only short-lived. Circumstances changed soon after 1807, and more particularly after 1809 when the treaty of Amritsar between the English and the Sikhs was signed. And the Maharaja busied himself again in his career of conquests and annexations.

Position in
1805

Attention
diverted

1. Infra, See Anglo-Sikh Relations

CHAPTER IV

Conquests and Annexations of Ranjit Singh.

B—After 1805

KASUR. 1807.

Kutbuddin
conspired

After capturing Pasrur and Chamba on the death of Nar Singh, the chief of these territories in the early part of the year 1807, the Maharaja turned his attention once again towards Kasur. Nizamuddin its ruler had been assassinated and his brother Kutbuddin had now come to power. Early in 1807, the Maharaja had been informed that Kutbuddin had entered into conspiracy with Muzaffar Khan of Multan and that both together, collecting a good number of ghazis, were preparing to create troubles for the Maharaja¹. Moreover, Kutbuddin was carrying on all sorts of persecutions against the Sikhs inhabiting his territory. To confirm the intelligence that the Maharaja got and to find out for himself the sort of treatment the Nawab was meting out to the Sikhs, Ranjit Singh sent Fakir Aziz-ud-din to meet the ruler of Kasur. The Fakir, however, did not get the hospitality from Kasur that he deserved and was rather condemned for his being in the service of the Sikhs.

Question of
prestige

On hearing this and also holding the view that the "subjugation of the Pathan colonists would tend materially to the advancement of his own prestige and popularity amongst the Khalsa"², the Maharaja organised a formidable expedition under his own and that of Jodh Singh's command and invaded the territory on February

1. Kanheya Lal, 'Twarikh-i-Punjab', p. 177.

2. Latif, pp. 366—367.

10,1807. Kutbuddin met him with his Ghazis out side the town, and here two battles were fought, the victory in both of them remaining with the Khalsa. The Nawab fled the battle field and along with many Ghazis, shut himself up inside his fort which had already been well stored with munitions of war and provisions. The fort was besieged, and bombardment of the walls with cannons started. The siege lasted for one month. One night a mine was laid beneath a wall of the fort, with the bursting of which the wall was breached. The Khalsa forces entered the fort and once again a bloody hand to hand fight ensued between Sikhs and the Ghazis, but ultimately the Ghazis were routed and the fort was occupied by the Sikhs. Kutbuddin was arrested when he was just making an effort to fly away, and was brought before the Maharaja. The Maharaja questioned him as to why he had violated the treaty, but on his humble submission and begging to be pardoned, the Maharaja granted him the territory of Mamdot, on the opposite bank of the Sutlej as jagir, "subject to his supplying 100 horsemen for service when required." Fatteh Khan, the son of Nizamu-ud-din and nephew of the chief was granted a jagir at Marup, in the Gurgaon district, subject to the same military conditions imposed upon his uncle and whole of the country was occupied by the Maharaja, placing it temporarily under Sardar Nihal Singh Attariwala.

Early in 1809, the Maharaja set out to subdue some hill states. The fort of Pathankot, the kiladar of which fled at the sight of the sikh forces, was the first to be reduced. Next the Maharaja marched towards Jasrota, but its ruler met the Maharaja at a distance from the territory, and made him rich presents and accepted his submission. The Maharaja confirmed the ruler in his possession, and after staying there for some days, set out to invade Chamba. The ruler of Chamba sent his agent to meet the Maharaja on the way. A large nazrana was paid to the

Kasur
occupied

Pathankot

Jasrota

Chamba
Basoli

A Durbar

Sialkot

Gujrat
Akhnur

Sheikhupura

Sansar
Chand's
appeal

Maharaja and Chamba also accepted his submission, promising to pay a tribute of Rs. 8,000 a year. A similar amount was fixed as tribute on the Raja of Basoli.

The Maharaja next moved down the hills, and convened a grand darbar on the plains adjoining them. All the tributary chiefs were invited to attend. All did so making rich presents to the Maharaja except Sardar Jiwan Singh of Sialkot and Sahib Singh of Gujrat, who according to Latif, "refused to comply with the order, less from a spirit of rebellion than from fear of treachery." After the Darbar was over, the Maharaja marched against Sialkot to punish his audacity. The city was taken by storm, but Jiwan Singh shut himself up in his fort with his guns and about one thousand fighting men. The fort was closely besieged, after seven days, a number of cannons were moved before a gate of the fort, where they fired all at once. After some time the gate was battered down, thus enabling the Maharaja's forces to enter it. Jiwan Singh was put in chains and the Maharaja left for Gujrat. Sahib Singh of Gujrat, however, had heard of the plight of Jiwan Singh and sent his agent with rich presents to meet the Maharaja on the way and accept his submission on his own conditions. Thus a treaty was signed between the Maharaja and Sahib Singh and Gujrat became tributary to him. Next he marched on Akhnur, Alam Khan the ruler of which having paid heavy nazrana, was reinstated on his territory. Sheikhupura was attacked likewise and taken.

Kangra

To dominate the hill states between Sutlej and Ravi it was essential that Ranjit Singh should occupy Kangra. Previous attempts of Sansar Chand, the ruler of Kangra to occupy Hoshiarpur having failed, he was now trying to occupy the eastern hill states. He attacked Kahlur, the chief of which appealed to Nepal and thus Sansar Chand was sandwiched between the two powers of the

Gurkhas and the Sikhs. The Gurkhas defeated Sansar Chand at Mahal Mori in 1806 and pressed on for Kangra. Sansar Chand was now forced to make an appeal to Ranjit Singh for help, but the latter demanded the fort of Kangra in return, which Sansar Chand naturally could not agree to. But his appeal to Jaswant Rao Holkar also having gone in vain, he approached Ranjit Singh again in 1809, agreeing to his conditions. Ranjit Singh sent his famous General, Muhkam Chand, to help Sansar Chand against the Nepalese, but with strong instructions that he should be careful of Sansar Chand's diplomacy. Muhkam Chand reached Kangra, and demanded that the fort should be handed over to him before they fought against the Nepalese. Sansar Chand hesitated and promising to cede the fort after the expulsion of Gurkhas from his territory, he sent his son Anurodh Chand to Muhkam Chand as a hostage. Muhkam Chand referred the case back to Ranjit Singh, but the latter refused to agree to this scheme. In the meanwhile, in connection with the mission of Metcalf to Ranjit Singh, a delicate situation developed in the Anglo-Sikh relations, to forestall which, Muhkam Chand was recalled by the Maharaja.

Thus left in the lurch, Sansar Chand approached Amar Singh Thapa, the ruler of Nepal direct, and promising to cede the fort to him instead, he took his permission to take out his family. But after bringing his family to a safer place, instead of handing over the fort to Nepal, he put his brother in it with four month's provision and closed its gates. Ranjit Singh could not tolerate this duplicity of Sansar Chand, and sent Sada Kaur to do the needful. Sada Kaur played a trick. Seating the boy Anurodh Chand on an elephant; she proceeded towards the fort, demanded the keys, they being refused, she made the boy order for them. The gates were thus opened and Ranjit Singh's forces occupied the fort¹. Thus "Sansar

Fort promised

Duplicity

1. See Griffin, Vol. i, p. 165.

Fort occupied.

Chand was foiled and Amar Singh retreated across the Sutlej loudly exclaiming that he had been grossly duped¹.

Gurkhas

Amar Singh Thapa, the ruler of Nepal had been negotiating with Ranjit Singh even before the fall of Kangra. But no agreement seems to have been reached between the two powers. When Kangra fell into the hands of the Sikhs and in alliance with the hill chiefs, the Sikhs cut off the line of communication of the Nepal forces, they had to purchase their way back home from Ranjit Singh by paying him one lakh rupees. In the East Nepalese had already been defeated by the Chinese, and now defeated in the West by the Sikhs, the Gurkhas began their expansionist policy in the South, thus resulting in the Anglo-Nepalese war.

Realised
one lakh

Dhalle-
walias 1807

Tara Singh

Widow
defeated.

Bhagat
Singh
of Punj-
garhia

The Dhallewali Misl which lay just on the bank of Sutlej in the trans-Sutlej area, was being ruled by its sardar, Tara Singh Gheba. So long as Tara Singh lived, Ranjit Singh remained on friendly terms with him and we learn that this friendship was so thick that Tara Singh even accompanied Ranjit Singh in some of his exploits. But when Tara Singh died in 1807, just at the time his body was being cremated, says Cunningham, Ranjit Singh's forces reached the place and attempted to occupy the territory. Tara Singh's widow took up the sword bravely in her own hand, but was defeated in the battle at Rahon, and her state was annexed. This added to Ranjit Singh's annual income by about 4 lakh rupees. Some of the historians have bitterly criticised Ranjit Singh on the way he occupied this territory.

Similarly, Bhagat Singh, the chief of Karor Singhia or Panjgarhia Misl was defeated and his State annexed.

1. Cunningham, p. 133.

Faizalpuria Misl occupying some area on both the banks of Sutlej, was being ruled by Budh Singh. Diwan Muhkam Chand, accompanied by Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia invaded the misl. Budh Singh took refuge in his territories South of the river, but that on its North, including Jullundur Doab, Haitpur and Patti was annexed.

Faizal-puria territories

Hariana and some surrounding country in the Jullundur Doab had been held by Bhagat Singh, who dominated the cis-Sutlej affairs for a considerable time. After his death, his territory was attacked in 1809, and all his trans-Sutlej possessions were annexed by Ranjit Singh. His widows, Ram Kaur and Raj Kaur, retained some of their territory in the cis-Sutlej area.

Hariana and surrounding territories

Nakkai Misl was taken in 1810. The Maharaja had married a Nakkai girl in 1802, who became the mother of his only son. "But this alliance", writes Griffin, "did not do the relations any good. When Kahn Singh, the nephew of Rani Raj Kaur, became the head of the family in 1807, the Maharaja tried to induce him to come and reside at court. But Kahn knew that he would not be allowed to leave again, Vestigia nulla retrorsum, and stoutly declined the honour. This did not save him, for the Maharaja annexed all his estates, which were too close to Lahore, Kasur, Chunian and Gogaira, to be sucessfully defended¹."

Nakkai territories were annexed

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia had been a common enemy of the allies—Ranjit Singh, Fateh Singh and Sada Kaur. When Ranjit Singh was strong enough to stand on his own legs, to the disgust of his allies, he established friendly realtions with Jodh Singh, the son of Jassa Singh who had died in 1803. He also gave Jagir to Jodh Singh's protege, Gurdit Singh the ex-chief of Amritsar. After the death of Jodh Singh in 1816, however, his State also was annexed. Giving an account of this annexation, thus writes Griffin. "He had a contract of friendship

Friendship with Jodh Singh Ramgarhia

1. Griffin, p. 164.

Griffin's account.

between himself and the Ramgarhia family drawn up, and in the temple of Amritsar, before the Sikh scripture, he stamped the paper, in his royal and illiterate way, with his open palm dyed with saffron..... But, in 1816, when the Sirdar (Jodh Singh) died, the opportunity of the Maharaja came. Having summoned the heirs to meet him at Nadaun to arrange for the succession, he surrounded the reception tent with troops, took them prisoners, and then marched a strong force.. and seized all the Ramgarhia estates¹.

Kanheya Misl

Ranjit Singh's activities had disgusted both of his allies, Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and his mother-in-law the chief of the Kanheya misl. With Sada Kaur, his relations began particularly to be embittered. Different reasons have been forwarded for this. According to Princip, Ranjit Singh had asked Sada Kaur to make a provision out of her own territory for his two sons Sher Singh and Tara Singh—who had been born to her daughter, Mehtab Kaur, now dead². Sada Kaur refused, but was compelled to execute a deed in favour of her grand sons. All her possessions, except some, such as Wadni in the cis—Sutlej regions, were thus annexed and she herself was kept a close prisoner till her death.

Differences with Sada Kaur

Her territories annexed.

1. Ranjit Singh, p. 97.

2. Regarding these two boys, writes Griffin. Sada Kaur "realized that if her daughter was to retain her influence she must present her husband with an heir, procured a boy during one of the Maharaja's expedition and passed him off as her daughter's. The child named Ishar Singh, only lived a year and a half and Sada Kaur determined to try the effect of twins. When Ranjit Singh had started on his Cis—Sutlej expedition of 1807 it was given out that Mahatab Kaur was pregnant, and on his return twin sons were presented to him, one purchased from a Chintz-weaver, and the other offspring of a slave-girl in Mai Sada Kaur's house". Griffin, p. 107.

According to Amarnath, it was her practice of writing letters to Ranjit Singh's enemies and preaching hatred against him, that infuriated Ranjit and he meted out this treatment to her. Both the views, however, seem to contain some element of truth and writes Murray "however humanity may plead in her behalf one does not see how she can be treated otherwise being what she is and has been".

Thus did Ranjit Singh rise and consolidate his power. Elphinstone returning from his journey to Kabul wrote in 1809, "Almost the whole of the Punjab belongs to Ranjit Singh who in 1805 was but one of many chiefs but when we passed had acquired the sovereignty of all the Sikhs in the Punjab."

Thus consolidated

Different views have been expressed by different writers on this policy of annexation of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. His was "the kingdom founded in violence, treachery and bloodshed," says Griffin¹. "The key note to Maharaja's character", continues he, "was selfishness²." Latif also says that Ranjit Singh's policy was the policy of snatching the rights of the weak. This view seems indeed to be corroborated when we think of his

General Review

1. See also Payne, 'A short History of the Sikhs', pp. 99-100; see, also Griffin, pp. 165-166.

2. See Griffin, Ranjit Singh, pp. 88-110

3. Quoting certain instances, writes Griffin. "Sirdar Fateh Singh of Kapurthala, for whom he publicly made a theatrical demonstration of affection, exchanging turbans in sign of perpetual brotherhood, and who had fought by his side in the campaigns of twenty years, he endeavoured to despoil of his possessions." And again, "when the young chief of Batalah married his sister to Sirdar Sher Singh, the families spent two lakhs of rupees on the festivities...But when the Maharaja heard of it, and of the boasts of the girl's mother that she had two parolas (a Punjabi word for a large basket of clay) of rupees, he at once" sent for them "and said that a family which could spend so much on a marriage must be able to afford him a contribution of Rs. 50,000." Griffin, Ranjit Singh, pp. 95-98.

Adverse criticism.

treacherous behaviour towards Sada Kaur and towards the widow of Tara Singh Gheba. His behaviour towards some other small states which he annexed, too, seems to have been objectionable and condemnable. Yet, however, there are some justifications in his favour, and we should judge him according to his own circumstances as they were.

Justifications.

"The full significance of this achievement (of Ranjit Singh of uniting the Punjab) can only be realised," says S. R. Kohli, when it is remembered that, for 700 years beginning from the eleventh century, that is to say, ever since the defeat of Raja Jai Pal by Mahmud of Ghazni, the tide of invasion had flowed constantly and steadily eastwards from Central Asia into India, and it was reserved for the sikhs under Ranjit Singh not only to dam the flood, but actually to roll it back across the Indus.¹"

Imperial race.

Nor can we forget the great service that he rendered to the Sikh nation itself, when he united all the warring elements together and converted the race of free booters into an imperial race with having a national consolidation and solid political entity. Moreover, by digging out a kingdom from the debris of high political philosophy of Guru Govind Singh, and from the chaos that was created by the mutual jealousies and selfish motives of the different sikh chiefs, Ranjit Singh channelised the big annual revenue of this state of Punjab, which amounted to over three crore rupees, and which could now be used for a concentrated programme of providing career to thousands in civil, military and political departments.

Peace

Ranjit Singh's service to humanity was that he established peace in Punjab after a long period of anarchy and warfare. Trade, different industries and other arts of peace could develop only under a settled government and Ranjit Singh's action in consolidating the Punjab,

1. S. R. Kohli, Cent. Vol. (Amritsar).

was a step towards developing a national economy and thus the national prosperity.

More, before Ranjit Singh, the Sikh states existed only for Sikhs, the Muslim states for Muslims and Hindu states for Hindus. By abolishing Gurmat in 1805, and by employing in offices the people from all races, the Muslims, Sikhs, Europeans and Hindus, Ranjit Singh established an empire with a cosmopolitan character and in this he was being more true sikh-like, than anyone among the other sikh chiefs of Punjab could be. "This political state..... though sikh in name on account of its circumstances, was really a secularised state which reconciled, protected and furthered diverse clashing interests of the different communities that lived under it¹".

And again, although Ranjit Singh did use violence as dictated by circumstances, writes G. C. Narang, an "important trait in the Maharaja's character was the total absence of cruelty and vindictiveness". And yet more. Wherever he used violence, he used of it as less as possible and never forgot to give liberal jagirs to the victims of his policy of annexation. Supporting this view, thus writes Griffin: "with all his capacity Ranjit Singh was not cruel of blood thirsty. After a victory or the capture of a fortress he treated the vanquished with leniency and kindness, however stout their resistance might have been, and there were at his court many chiefs despoiled of their estates but to whom he had given suitable employ, and who accepted their position with the resignation born of Eastern fatalism, which takes the sharpest sting out of defeat.....and, in addition, there was a large group of Muhammadan Khans and nobles who would have received short shrift from Gobind Singh, but whom Ranjit Singh wisely attached to his fortunes, thereby materially strengthening his position in the Western districts.

No discrimination.

No cruelty

1. A. C. Khana, Cent. Vol., Amritsar, 1938, p. 199.
2. Ranjit Singh, pp. 98—99.

Honourable
subjection

In fact, if these chiefs were reduced from equality and rivalry, they were done so only to "honourable subjection" and that is why everybody, whether Hindu, Muslim or a Sikh, mourned when the Maharaja died in 1839. With his death, the people said, "the Punjab has become widow."

CHAPTER V

The Conquests and Consolidation of Multan, Kashmir and Peshawar.

The North-Western Policy

A—The Conquest of Multan.

The province of Multan, which in the 'Ain-i-Akbari' and in Ranjit Singh's records, is known as 'Darul Amaan' was a part of the Mughal empire. At that time it consisted of the Multan Division of Punjab, as it existed towards the close of the British rule, Bhawalpur state north of the dry bed of the river Hakara, the districts of Shikarpur and Jacobabad in Sind, and the districts of Sibi and Mari in Baluchistan.

Multan in
Mughal time

When the Mughal power in India was disintegrating, the province of Multan was conquered by the Pathans. In the southern parts of the province, between the rivers Sutlej and Hakra, a big zamindar was recognised as nawab, by Nadir Shah in 1739, which later on developed into the state of Bhawalpur. The cis-Indus portion of the Multan, not including the territories of the Bhawalpur state, was conquered by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1752, who appointed a separate governor for it. It was this part of the province of the Mughals, with which Ranjit was later concerned. This country was conquered by Hari Singh Bhangi in 1771. But the Bhangis were expelled from the country in 1779, by Timur, the successor of Ahmad Shah Abdali who now handed it over to a relative of his, Muzaffar Khan of Saddozai clan, and appointed him as its governor, with whom Ranjit had later to fight. At this time though in papers the state of Multan was under the suzerainty of the Afghan King, in practice more or less it was an independent state.

Later
Multan

Its Importance

Importance of the city of Multan during the time of Ranjit Singh lay in the fact that besides being the capital of the state, it was also a centre of trade through which goods were exchanged with the countries lying beyond the Bolan Pass. Total revenue from all the sources, as it was later on calculated, was Rs. 6,80,975 per year. And this could be a big addition to Ranjit Singh's financial sources. Moreover, there being a direct route from Multan to the Bolan Pass, leading to the Kandhar province under the Persians at that time, Bolan Pass itself was defended by a force at Multan. The state of Multan, besides, pierced between the state of Bhawalpur and Southern Sind, by occupying which the Maharaja could prevent these Muslim states from coming together at any time, against the Sikhs.

Why five expeditions?

The conquest of Multan was made finally in 1818, but before that Ranjit had to lead as many as five expeditions. Several reasons have been forwarded for so much delay in this conquest. Some sikh historians attribute the delay to Ranjit Singh's generosity, that he wanted to give his defeated opponents opportunities to prove their loyalty. Some other writers say that Ranjit Singh was more anxious to possess the treasury of Multan than the state itself, and he was apprehensive that his attempt to occupy the state immediately may make its ruler escape with it. Every time, therefore, when he led an expedition, he accepted a nazrana from the ruler and returned, till the treasury was completely exhausted. There is yet another view, according to which Ranjit Singh was not strong enough to occupy Multan at the first attempt and that is why he had to lead as many as six expeditions.

1st Invasion

Be that as it may, Ranjit Singh led his first invasion in 1802 and according to Kannaiya Lal¹, the city of Mul-

1. Twarakh-i-Punjab.

tan was attacked and plundered and after that the Sikh forces returned without occupying it. But the more accepted view is that which is given by Griffin, Dewan Amar Nath and Prof. Chopra. According to this view, the Multan ruler Muzaffar Khan submitted peacefully before the Sikh forces. Nay he met them thirty miles from the city itself and by paying a huge nazrana, secured his deliverance. He also promised a yearly tribute.

The second invasion, according to some writers, was led in 1805 for the reason that after some time Muzaffar Khan stopped paying the tribute. But in the midst of his activities there, it is said, the Maharaja's attention was recalled to Amritsar, where pursued by English forces Holkar had entered for refuge. Ranjit Singh had to leave the work half-done and return to cope with the situation thus created.

2nd Invasion

Ranjit Singh led his third invasion on March 15, 1807. Several reasons are forwarded for this. It is said that Muzaffar Khan was conspiring with Qutab Khan, the ruler of Kasur, who succeeding his father Nizam-ud-din, wanted to break with Lahore. Secondly it is said, Muzaffar Khan gave shelter to Ahmed Khan Sial of Jhang, who being defeated by the Maharaja, had fled his territory.

3rd Invasion

After reaching the vicinity of Multan, Fateh Singh was sent by the Maharaja to demand from the ruler an explanation for his conduct and the reason for his stopping the payment of the annual tribute. On receiving an unsatisfactory reply, Ranjit Singh invaded the city and occupied its many parts, but he utterly failed in capturing the fort and had to retire after getting an indemnity of Rs. 70 thousands.

Indemnity paid.

The fourth invasion was led in 1810, when it is said, the Sikh forces commanded by Diwan Mohkam Chand, occupied the city and surrounded the fort. A bloody battle was fought with Muzaffar Khan's forces, but the

4th Invasion

walls of the fort were so strongly built that despite the use of the famous Bhangi cannon, no breach could be caused in them. Finally "Muhkam Chand was obliged through illness to relinquish the command, and at the end of a month, every general capable of taking the lead having been slain, Ranjit Singh made terms with the Nawab and raised the seige, the latter engaging to pay him two and a half lakhs of rupees.¹" According to Latif, Muzaffar Khan also promised to supply some soldiers in the army of the Lahore ruler.

According to Griffin, when the two parties were thus busy in the bloody battle, both of them appealed respectively to the English for help. But the latter refused to do so for the reason that after the treaty of Amritsar with the Maharaja, Multan lay outside their province.

5th Invasion

The fifth invasion of which greater details are given by Ganesh Das in his 'Fateh nama Guru Khalsa ji ka,' was led towards the end of the year 1917. Before sending the forces, strict instructions were issued to the local officers on both sides of the road from Lahore to Multan, to make all arrangements for the supply of food etc. All the available boats on the Ravi and Chenab, were requisitioned for official use, and special postal arrangements were made, by establishing a postal chauky at the distance of every three miles on the road.

Kharak Singh's command.

A force of 20,000 soldiers was collected, which included infantry soldiers, the cavalry and artillery. The Bhangi cannon was also brought forth. The nominal command of the force was given to Prince Kharak Singh who, according to Ganesh, was accompanied by his mother Datar Kaur for his encouragement. But in reality

¹. Payne, p. 91.

the control was in the hands of Mr. Diwan Chand. Mu-zaffar Khan, on the other hand, was also alert. He called all the Muslims of the adjoining territories for a jihad, and even appealed to the Afghan ruler for help.

The Sikh forces marched on January 14, 1818. Reaching Trimmu soon, a small force was sent to conquer the forts of Khangarh and Muzaffargarh. Here a reinforcement was received under the command of Fateh Singh Ahlu-walia. Here an appeal was also received from the Multan ruler promising to pay a tribute if the Sikh forces returned. But the Sikh forces, as instructed by the Maharaja were determined to carry the expedition through.

The city of Multan was surrounded by the Sikh forces and bombardment started with guns on the walls around it. A considerable number of Sikh soldiers was killed. Yet, however, they were soon able to cause breaches in the wall. The Pathans fled and enclosed themselves within the fort. After occupying the city, the Sikhs besieged the fort, but considering the blood-shed that the active fight between the two forces would entail, an appeal was made to the Nawab on behalf of the Maharaja, to leave the fort and be satisfied with a good jagir elsewhere. The Nawab was amenable to the appeal, but when the Sikh representatives went to settle the terms of the agreement on 16th May the Nawab had already, according to Sohan Lal, changed his mind under an inspiration from his officers who had aroused his spirit of self-respect.

City surrounded.

Besieged

Jagir offered

ਹਮ ਹੈ ਪਟਨ, ਮਨੋ ਘੋਰ ਕੀ ਨਾ ਆਨ,
ਲੜ੍ਹੇ ਮਰੋ ਸੇ ਲਉ ਪਰਨ, ਸਦਾ ਅਗਿ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੈ ।

After this, the Sikhs directed their cannons towards the fort once again and started bombardment. But although the wall near the Khizrigate and at some other places was breached, the Afghans carried on their stiff resistance, by filling up the breaches with earth and sand. Hundreds

Bombard-
ment.

Sikhs entered fort.

of Sikhs laid down their lives and for a time it was difficult to decide whether one side was stronger or the other. Finally one after-noon, when after a hard fight both the sides had retired for some rest, taking advantage of the comparatively peaceful atmosphere, Sadhu Singh Akali, writes Griffin, dashed near a breach in the wall and butchering the Pathan guards in a moment's time, entered the fort. Hearing the call of Sat Sri Akal from this brave Akali, the Sikh soldiers rushed following him. The Nawab on hearing this, came out with a naked sword with all his nears and dears and a hand to hand fight ensued. Thus writes Ganesh Das :—

ਚੜਿਓ ਮੁਲੈਂਦਰ ਖਾਂ, ਆਇਓ ਮਹਾਂ ਰਿਸਾਨ,
ਮੰਗ ਲੀਏ ਜਵਾਨ, ਜੋ ਜਗੀਰਾਂ ਬੈਠੇ ਖਾਵਤੇ ।
ਆਏ ਕਰ ਕੈਪ, ਹਾਬ ਲੀਏ ਢਾਲ ਧੈਪ,
ਆਜ ਕੈਸੇ ਰਹੇ ਓਪ, ਸਿੰਘ ਸੰਚ ਕਰ ਆਵਤੇ
ਬੀਸ ਤੀਸ ਸੌ ਦੁਰਾਨੀ, ਹਾਬ ਲੇਏ ਹੈ ਕਮਾਨੀ,
ਐਸੇ ਕਹਿਤ ਜ਼ਬਾਨੀ ਚਲੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਪਾਵਤੇ ।
ਆਏ ਭਿਊਤ੍ਰੀ ਕੇ ਜਾਣ, ਮਾਰੇ ਤੀਰ ਤੇ ਕਮਾਨ,
ਲਾਗੇ ਸਿੰਘਣ ਕੇ ਆਨ, ਭਿਗੇ ਮੁਰਡਾ ਜੋ ਖਾਵਤੇ ।

Nawab killed

In the midst of this hand-to-hand fight, the Sikhs, according to Griffin, drew out their guns. The Nawab challenged them to fight with swords like brave men, but paying little heed, they shot him down, along with his five sons. The sixth was badly wounded, and the rest two submitted to the Sikhs. They were brought to Lahore, along with all the rest of the members of the family, and Ranjit Singh fixed an annual pension of Rs. 30,000 for their livelihood. And the Maharaja, as usual, concluded all these activities with huge offerings in the Gurdwara at Amritsar. Deep-mala was celebrated in Amritsar and Lahore and huge rewards and titles bestowed on the brave generals and soldiers who won this honour of the conquest.

Sons granted jagir

Deep-mala

This conquest, as mentioned above, besides adding to his financial sources, established Ranjit Singh's prestige among his enemies, and Afghans began to consider themselves as the next natural target.

B—Conquest of Kashmir

For two hundred years before Ranjit Singh attempted to occupy Kashmir, this beautiful valley, the pride possession of any nation, had been ruled by Mahomedan rulers. For a long time it remained a part of Afghan empire, and when Zaman Shah, the grandson of Ahmad Shah Abdali acceded the Kabul throne, he appointed Ata Mohammad as its governor. Zaman Shah, however, was himself defeated and blinded by an internal rising and had to run away to India. Shah Mahmud, the next ruler was in his turn, ousted by Shah Shuja, his half brother. But the former proved to be too strong for the latter, and with the help of Fateh Khan, whom he later appointed as the wazir of Kabul, Shah Mahmud re-captured the throne from his half-brother. But before retiring from the scene, Shah Shuja was determined to make one more attempt for the restoration of his power, and in this attempt he was helped by Ata Mohammad, the governor of Kashmir. Shah Shuja, however, failed in his purpose, and having lost again and having spoiled his relations, with the Kashmir governor after some adventures he fell into the hands of his brother, Jehandad Khan, the governor of Attock, who sent him to Ata Mohammad to be kept as a close prisoner.

Fateh Khan, the Kabul wazir, in the meanwhile, felt estranged against Ata Mohammad for his help to Shah Mohammad's enemy, and decided in 1812, to invade and capture Kashmir. Just this time, Ranjit Singh had also sent his forces to march on Kashmir. When both the sides learnt of each other's designs, they decided to seek each other's co-operation in the venture by declaring it to be their common cause. Fateh Khan wanted Ranjit Singh's help because he was afraid

Its history.

Fateh Khan

A common cause.

that the latter may not help Ata Mohammad against him, and some writers even say that his desire to meet Ranjit Singh was only an intrigue to stab him to death. But Ranjit Singh was not un-aware of such possibilities and if, as according to Dr. Sinha, "The young Barakzais had attempted to attack Ranjit Singh a repetition of the episode of Afzal Khan and Shiva Ji would not have been unlikely"¹

Maharaja's purpose.

Maharaja's purpose in seeking Fateh Khan's co-operation was also definite. With Kashmir and Kabul in opposition, and the hill states yet half subdued, he did not feel strong enough to get it alone. And as a matter of fact it seems that Ranjit's desire to invade the valley precipitated only when there was a possibility of co-operation from Fateh Khan in this venture, and if prior to this, Ranjit Singh ordered his forces to march on the valley, it was not an attempt to occupy it with the first stroke. This march was supposed to be only an exploratory march, and Ranjit Singh's purpose was to get territorial knowledge for future expeditions and not the conquest of the territory itself. Another reason for this march, as some writers assert, seems to have been his eagerness to secure from the Kashmir governor the person of Shah Shuja, whose wife Wafa Begum had taken shelter with him, was being paid a huge maintenance allowance of Rs. 4000 per month, and had promised to hand over the Koh-i-Nur to the Maharaja, if Ranjit Singh was able to bring her husband out of the clutches of Ata Mohammed.

First
Overtures

Different writers hold different opinions as to who made the first overtures. According to Murray², it was Ranjit who initiated the matter, while Sohan Lal³ and

1. 'Ranjit Singh', p. 46

2. 'Ranjit Singh'.

3. Diary of Ranjit Singh.

Dewan Amar Nath¹ assert that it was Fateh Khan who approached first. It seems however that the both met the half way at Rohtas and decided the matter.

On terms of the agreement struck between the two, again, opinions differ. According to Wade and Murray, Ranjit Singh had no territorial ambitions on Kashmir. He promised to help Fateh Khan with 12,000 soldiers under the command of Muhkam Chand, and give facilities to Afghan forces to march through Rajori and Pir Panjal, in return only for nine lakh rupees from the Kashmir spoils and the Afghan help in conquest of Multan. Sohan Lal holds that the Afghans were to pay an amount of Rs. 1 lakh to Ranjit annually, besides their help in the conquest of Multan. Ranjit Singh's own letter to Fateh Khan, written in April, 1813, however, claims $\frac{1}{2}$ of the Kashmir territory, $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Kashmir spoils and help in the conquest of Multan, in return for the help that his soldiers had rendered him in the Kashmir conquest.

The terms

Commenting upon the purpose for which the agreement was signed, thus writes Payne: "Neither party desired to come to blows, and neither was inclined to advance into the hills with the possibility of having its retreat cut off by the other. There was but one alternative. The leaders met and agreed to finish the hunt together, and divide the spoil. On this understanding the parties advanced, each having made a mental reservation to outwit the other if the opportunity offered²."

The purpose

Be that as it may. With Muhkam Chand's help, Fateh Khan occupied Kashmir, but refused to comply with the terms of the treaty. Thus Ranjit was outdone in the game and his forces had to leave "the country in disgust", as the British records say. But we have discussed above that Ranjit Singh was perhaps not anxious to

Sikhs
deceived.

1. Zafarnama, edited by S. R. Kohli.

2. 'A Short History o the Sikhs', p. 92.

occupy Kashmir at this stage, and we seem to be further strengthened in our views when we learn that Ata Mohammad at one stage, offered to join Ranjit Singh against Fateh Khan, but Ranjit refused it. Had he been anxious to occupy Kashmir and force Fateh Khan out of the valley, no opportunity could be better than this.

Yet, however, although Muhkam Chand got some local knowledge for future Kashmir expeditions, and although as Ferrier writes, he "got the person of Shuja who preferred to be with the Sikhs inspite of seductive offers made by Fateh Khan whose idea most probably was to make use of Shah Shuja in his plans for the reconstruction of the Afghan Empire and falling upon him when he had no further need of his services", we can not deny that Fateh Khan's refusal to act upon the terms of the treaty was a diplomatic defeat of the Maharaja.

Secured
Shah Shuja

Attock

But the Maharaja was not a raw hand in politics. We have already made a mention that Attock was being governed by Ata Mohammad's own brother Jehandad Khan. After the fall of the former, the latter feeling alarmed, invited Ranjit Singh to occupy his fort, which he did at a cheap cost of Rs. one lakh¹. Some writers assert that Ranjit Singh was intriguing with Jehandad Khan even before an expedition on Kashmir was led, and Murray goes so far as to say that it was this action of the Maharaja, due to "which Fateh Khan refused to share his Kashmir booty." Yet, however, this was a master-stroke of the Maharaja's policy towards Afghans, and a crushing blow on Fateh Khan's rising ambitions.

Occupied

A master-
stroke

Importance

Importance of Ranjit Singh's occupation of the Attock fort can never be over expressed. The fort had a great local importance, as lying on that general route through

1. This amount had to be disbursed among Jehandad Khan's soldiers who would vacate the fort only after the long standing arrears in their salaries had been paid.

which all the Central-Asian invaders of India had come. It could act as a strong guard for the protection of this country. Not only that this high-road to Indi- was closed to Afghans, but with this fort beyond the Indus in hand, Ranjit Singh could easily expand his territories right upto the Khybar pass. It was not long therefore, before Fateh Khan's younger brother, Dost Mohmad marched against Maharaja's forces, with 4,000 of the best Afghan soldiers, to retrieve his position.

Both the forces met at Chuch, but despite Dost Mohmad's strategies, Sikhs won a decisive victory. Marching further, the Sikh soldiers plundered the Afghan camp at Hazro, and although, as according to Dewan Amar Nath, Dost Mohmad really showed his bravery when he advanced right upto the Sikh topkhana, yet final victory lay with the Sikhs, and Fateh Khan had to go back to Afghanistan disheartened.

Although Baron Van Hugel does not attach much importance to it, yet a closer study shows that importance of the Sikh victory here can never be over expressed. It being the first Sikh-Afghan war, Ranjit Singh's victory here gave him a lot of encouragement for future expansion. Besides securing the control of the strategically placed Attock fort, it opened the gates for Sikh exploits in the North-West. And yet greater importance of the victory was that, as Dr. N.K. Sinha writes, had Fateh Khan been victorious here, with rich Kashmir valley in hand, and consolidated power in Afghanistan, Peshawar and Attock; and "flushed with victory over the sikhs, he would certainly have attempted to win back the whole heritage of Ahmad Shah¹".

The second sikh expedition on Kashmir was led in 1814. Azim Khan, the younger brother of Fateh Khan, had been left as Kashmir governor after its conquest. After

Battles of
Chuch and
Hazro

Sikhs
victorious.

Importance

2nd Expedi-
tion failed

1. Sinha, Ran i Singh, p. 52

full preparations, Ranjit Singh sent an expedition under Ramdayal, the grand son of Muhkam Chand, and followed him personally to look after the supply and re-inforcement. The conquest of Kashmir, however, was not as easy as it was supposed to be. A pitched battle was fought, but Ranjit Singh had to send a re-inforcement before Ramdayal could stand the Afghan furies. To add to this the vagaries of the nature, heavy rains, precarious supply and insufficient number of troops at his command after he had sent a re-inforcement to hard-pressed Ramdayal, forced the Maharaja to retreat. Ramdayal was surrounded by Afghans, but finally let off¹.

Views on incident Different views have been expressed over the incident. Diwan Amar Nath says, Ramdayal was victorious, killing 2,000 Afghans. It was only when Azim Khan acknowledged Ranjit Singh's supremacy and sent him presents that Ramdayal returned. But this view is not corroborated by the facts at our command. Another view is that Azam Khan had a regard for Ramdayal's grand father Muhkam Chand and it was due to this reason that he let him go.

Accepted view The more accepted view, as held by M' Gregor and confirmed by Dr. Sinha, is that Azim Khan not being strong enough to dislodge Ramdayal, and both sides being just in a balanced position, the respect for Ramdayal's grand-father might have been invoked to the advantage of the both².

A tragedy

Yet, however, it can not be denied that Ranjit Singh's retreat was a big tragedy. Some of the best Sikh soldiers and generals such as Fateh Singh Chhachhi, Desa Singh Maan and Gurbakhsh Singh were lost to the Maharaja and besides it was proved that Ranjit Singh's power was not yet strong enough for such big adventures, and against such great generals as Azim Khan.

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1. "This disaster was a sore subject with the Maharaja, and he never touched on it without denouncing Cashmere as a vile place." Foot Note, M' Gregor, Vol. I., p. 173.
 2. See also Cunningham.

Third Expedition.

Third expedition was led in 1819, when Ranjit Singh was in more fortunate circumstances. Fateh Khan, the Kabul Wazir had died, and Azim Khan, the great general who could so successfully rule over the destiny of Kashmir for a couple of years, left Kashmir to succeed him. Jabbar Khan, the next Kashmir governor was weak. Sikh forces were sent under Misr Dewan Chand. Here again contradictory views are held. According to some accounts it was a well contested fight, while according to the others, it was a bloodless victory for the Sikhs. Anyway, this time the Sikhs were successful in occupying the valley and thus, Kashmir the pride of Asia, passed under Sikh control. Misr Dewan Chand, in appreciation of his feat, was given the title of Fateh-u-Nusrat, or a man in whose fortune victory is a permanent feature.

In 1820 Ranjit Singh sent Khushal Singh, who after expelling Zaman Khan, the Afghan governor of Dera Ghazi Khan, handed over the territory to Sadi Khan, the Nawab of Bhawalpur, in return for a big sum of money as tribute. Sadi Khan already held the fork-land between Indus and Chenab, under the Sikh protection, though his cis-Sutlej territories had been under the British protection since 1815.

Next in 1821 Ranjit invaded Mankera. Its Nawab, Haji Ahmed Khan, held also the territories of Dera Ismail Khan, Tonk, Bannu, Liya and Kundian. Surrounding Mankera, Ranjit Singh defeated the Afghans. The Nawab was given a good jagir elsewhere and all his territory passed under the valiant Sikh ruler¹.

C—The Conquest of Peshawar.

Before we discuss how Ranjit Singh occupied this territory, it is essential to have a short review of its back history. At that time, Shah Mahmud, the grandson of

More
ImportantJabbar
KhanKashmir
occupiedDera Ghazi
KhanMankera,
Dera Ismail
Khan, Tonk
and Banu
etc.

Its history

1. See Payne, pp. 99—107.

Ahmad Shah Abdali was in power in Kabul, with Fateh Khan Barkazai as his wazir. On this side of Khyber, all the territories of Peshawar and Naushehra etc. had been handed over by Fateh Khan to his brothers, Sardar Yar Muhamad Khan, Sultan Muhamad Khan and Dost Muhamad Khan. The rising power of Fateh Khan, however, was a sore in the eyes of Shah Mahmud, whose son, Kamran, got the wazir murdered by an intrigue. It was this, as discussed above, which brought Fateh Khan's brother Azim Khan from Kashmir on the scene. Azim Khan got Shah Mahmud and Kamran imprisoned and brought Shah Mahmud's cousin, Shah Ayub, on the Kabul throne. It was to benefit from this confusion in Kabul, that Ranjit Singh invaded Peshawar in 1818. Afghan governors Yar Mohmad and Dost Mohmad fled the city and took refuge in the Yusufzai hills. Ranjit Singh occupied Peshawar, but very wisely he decided not to rule it directly unless he had collected complete strategic information regarding it and the surrounding areas. Collecting a nazrana of Rs. 25,000 he handed over the city to his old friend, Jehandad Khan, the ex-governor of Attock, and returned to Lahore. After his return to Lahore, however, Yar Mohamad Khan re-conquered the city and expelled Jehandad Khan from it. Ranjit Singh sent another expedition almost immediately, but this time Yar Mohamad himself, paying a nazrana of Rs. 50,000, accepted to be Ranjit Singh's tributary. Next, as suggested by his French officers, Ranjit Singh captured some border towns to clear his way towards the actual annexation of Peshawar. Darband and Mankerah were occupied. Dera Ismail Khan was occupied by the Maharaja in 1821, and Dera Ghazi Khan in 1822.

First Invasion

To Jehan-dad Khan

The Battle of Naushehra

Azim Khan could not tolerate that his brother should rule Peshawar in that manner on behalf of Ranjit Singh. About the day of Dusehra in 1823, when Ranjit Singh realised his annual tribute from Yar Mohamad, Azim Khan was further infuriated and collected a huge force to challenge the Sikh power. He also incited the chiefs and Mulkais inhabiting the territory between Attock and Peshawar for a Jihad.

The cause

On the other hand, when Ranjit Singh learnt of all these developments, he immediately sent a force under Prince Sher Singh, to meet the challenge. Soon after another force was sent which included the famous generals such as Hari Singh Nalwa, Attar Singh Sandhanwalia, Dhana Singh Malwai and Dewan Kirpa Ram, the son of Dewan Muhammed Chand, along with some infantry soldiers recently trained under French officers Ventura and Allard. Accompanied by Misr Dewan Chand, Ranjit Singh followed shortly after.

The forces met at Naushehra¹, and for a time it looked as if the Sikh forces were going to be defeated. Akali Phula Singh was killed regarding which Ganesh Das writes :—

At Nau-shahra

ਹੂਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੇ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ, ਡੇ ਪੁਸ਼ਨ ਪਨਾਨ ।
ਅਥ ਸਿੰਘਨ ਕਉ ਜੀਤ ਹੈਂ, ਮੌਰਛ ਬੜੇ ਬਲਵਾਨ ।

Call of Sat
Sri Akal

After praying to Guru Gobind Singh for help, Ranjit Singh spoke violently to the Sikhs. He shouted the call of Sat Sri Akal, hearing which the Sikhs were actually enthused as if Guru Gobind Singh himself had come to help them. Thus writes Ganesh Das :

ਬਿਟ ਕੀ ਲਾਜ ਪਢਾਣ ਰਿਦੈ, ਸਿੰਘ ਆਰਤ ਜਾਣ ਕਿਪਾਲ ਹੋਇ ਆਏ ।
ਸੋਹੇ ਤੁਰੰਗ ਸੁਣੇਜਾ ਲੈ ਹਾਥ, ਜੇ ਤੁਰਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਬੇਗ ਭਜਾਏ ।

1. For further details see S. R. Kohli's *Fateh Nama Guru Khalsa ji ka*, pp. 149—229.

The Losses

The Pathans felt as if a Sikh reinforcement had arrived and they fled before the Sikhs. Thus says Burns, "The Sikhs won a victory because of the words of Sat Sri Akal".

In this battle about four thousand Pathans and two thousand Sikhs were killed. Many famous Sikh officers such as Baba Phula Singh, Gurkha General Balu Bhadur and S. Garbha Singh were killed. Azim Khan was so much disheartened, writes Latif, confirmed by M' Gregor, that he died on his way back of heart failure.

Ranjit Singh re-entered the city of Peshawar on 6th March 1824. He was accorded a huge welcome by its inhabitants, as according to Ganesh Das again :

ਸਟਕਾਰ ਅੰਤ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਸ਼ਹੁ ਆਏ ਸੂ ਮਿਲ ਪੱਥਰ ਮੇਂ ।

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਬੁਹਾਮਨ ਛੱਤਰੀ, ਪੰਨ ਭਾਗ ਹਮ ਦਿਸ ਠੋਰ ਮੇਂ ।

Yar Khan

Yar Khan who had fled the city on seeing the advancing forces on both the sides, returned, and Ranjit thought it better to re-appoint him his governor for an annual tribute of Rs. 1,10,000, after which he returned to Lahore^a.

Importance

Just "as the battle with Fateh Khan on the plains of Chuch decided the supremacy of the Sikhs in the east of Indus, this campaign established his power between that river and Peshawar."

Battle of Saider

Sayad Ahmad

Things, however had not yet settled in Peshawar. It was only within three years of Ranjit Singh's establishment of peace in Peshawar that, in 1827 an Afghan, Sayad Ahmad, declaring himself to be Paghambar challenged Yar Khan, occupied Peshawar and incited the Afghans for a jihad against Ranjit Singh. He was a fanatic,

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1. A different view however is held by Kaye and Mohan Lal, according to which Ranjit Singh rather bribed his way through.
 2. According to Dr. R. R. Sethi, the annual tribute was to be 15 horses and other products of Peshawar. See, 'Lahore Darbar'.

tbus writes M 'Gregor, "and like others of this stamp, was a dangerous and seditious character¹." Some writers doubt him to have been a British puppet, by whom he was helped and encouraged secretly². Hari Singh Nalwa was sent to suppress the up-rising, and he defeated the Afghans at Saidu. But after some time they collected again, this time in a formidable number, murdered Yar Mohamad and occupied Peshawar. For a time it looked as if Peshawar had actually slipped out of the Sikh hold. But soon Ranjit Singh sent his best general, Ventura, and Sher Singh, who reconquered the city. But this time again, it was not thought feasible to rule Peshawar directly, and Sultan Mohamad, a brother of Yar Mohamad was appointed its governor on the same conditions as before, because, thus writes Dr. R. R. Sethi, Ranjit Singh "distrusted his ability to maintain his hold over that distant country and its fierce population between whom and the Sikhs there existed proverbial antagonism.¹"

City re-conquered

Yar
Mohamad

In 1833-34, Shah Shuja entered into an alliance with Ranjit Singh in which he promised to renounce all claims on Peshawar in return for Ranjit Singh's help for his reinstatement on the Afghan throne. But the ink on the treaty had not yet dried when Shah Shuja was said to have remarked confidentially that such "agreements are of no use", nor had he the intention to work on it in connection with Peshawar. When Ranjit Singh learnt of it, he decided to annex Peshawar forthwith. Moreover, for some time, Hari Singh Nalwa too had been advocating a very forward policy, and Ranjit Singh also had strong doubts in the intentions of the Barakzai brothers of Peshawar. Dost Muhamad too being busy with Shah Shuja, this was the best opportunity to annex that province of Afghanistan.

Shah
Shuja's
alliance

1. History of the Sikhs, vol. i, p. 196.

Peshawar
annexed

Consequently, early in April, 1834, Ranjit Singh sent an expedition under the nominal command of prince Nau, Nihal Singh, but in reality under S. Hari Singh Nalwa and the French Generals, Ventura and Court, who took a position at Chamkani. The Barakazai chiefs of Peshawar had already got intelligence regarding the Maharaja's plan and having sent away their families, were ready to vacate themselves. The excuse forwarded was the delay in the payment of the tribute by Sultan Mohamad, and strangely enough, for the presence of Nau Nihal Singh in the area for the first time as head of the expedition, it was demanded that the tribute be enhanced. This demand for the enhancement of the tribute was immediately complied with, but the Sikhs having different plans up their sleeves, Hari Singh Nalwa sent a message that since Nau Nihal Singh wanted to visit the city, the Sultan should vacate it for some time. The Sultan did it and fled to the village Sheikhan on the Bara river. Peshawar was occupied by the Sikhs on May 6, 1834. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was appointed its governor. An information regarding this was sent to the British authorities, who did not feel very happy and Wade was permitted to forward only personal congratulations to the Maharaja..

Dost Muhamad Attempts to Re-occupy it.

Dost
Mohamad's
offer

When the news regarding the loss of Peshawar reached Dost Mohamad, he was busy in his battle against Shah Shuja. The loss stung him so badly that he flung his troops against his enemy and routed him in the battle field. Shah Shuja fled the field with his mercenary soliders. In the first flush of the victory, he wrote to Ranj.t Singh to hand over Peshawar to him for a tribute equal in amount to that paid by Sultan Mohamad or prepare for war. "If by way of favour, benevolence and generosity you will surrender to us again, then we will send to the court of the ruler of the World (Ranjit Singh)

the tribute of Sultan Khan." The Maharaja's reply of course was a curt refusal and Dost Mohamad replied it with declaration of war on September 18, 1834, to which an equally defiant rejoinder was given by Ranjit Singh.

War declared

In order to create a fair chance for success, Dost Mohamad decided to give this war against the Maharaja a religious character. But this was possible only if 'Khutba' was read in his name and if he could strike coins in his name. And this was possible only if he declared himself to be a king, for which he must have good means to keep up the title. Moreover, he feared opposition from his brothers, if he declared himself a king. Sultan Mohamad one of his brothers actually left him on the very mention of the fact. After several considerations, however, Dost Mohamad could find no escape from this plan, and on December 4, 1834, he was proclaimed 'Amir-ul-Momnin' (leader of the faithful), by Mir Vaiz, the chief Mulla of Kabul. The next day he assumed the title of 'Ghazi' and struck coins in his name. But his resources being limited he had to resort to extortions of money and to levying arbitrary taxes. His ruthless efforts to collect money made no distinctions between infidels and Muslims and between the people of one race and those of the other. And within a short time, thus writes Mohan Lal, the country was made to look "an appalling picture of extortion and torture." But with all these extortions, he was able to collect only a paltry sum of 12 lakh rupees. He also sent appeal to several other chiefs to come to his assistance. But Mohamad Murad Beg of Kunduz refused it, and so did the chief of Kandhar. The Amirs of Sind agreed to give some aid but the conditions forwarded for it made impossible to avail it. Only Mir Alam Khan of Bajore and Fateh Khan Ysufzai of Panjshir agreed to supply some soldiers.

Religious colour

Extortions

The British Government in India were also requested to help and for this Dost Mohamad tried to make a

British requested

capital of the Russian menace in Central Asia. Wade actually seemed to have been enamoured of this opportunity and he addressed a letter to the Governor General, telling him that here was the best opportunity to extend British influence in Afghanistan. He proposed that to allay Ranjit Singh's fears, he would be told that only friendly relations were being established with Dost and later as he proposed, the British may try to mediate between Dost and the Maharaja and settle their dispute in favour of the former. The Governor General, however, rejected this proposal and asked Wade to continue his friendly negotiations with Dost without in any way committing the British. The inexplicit language used by Wade in his letters to Dost thereafter, deceived him to hope even till the end.

Ranjit Singh sent a force of 25,000 soldiers in the middle of April 1835. The two forces stood arrayed against each other on their respective border, but neither dared take the initiative. Dost Mohamad was waiting for a definite reply from the British, while Ranjit Singh delayed the action to play a diplomatic game against Dost, "a sphere in which", according to Wade "he was always at his best." Ranjit Singh deputed an American adventurer Harlan (who was then in his service) and Fakir Aziz-ud-din, to negotiate a settlement with Dost, but actually to bribe his sardars. Dost Mohamad was completely taken in. Harlan and the Fakir seduced Sultan Mohamad, who also saved them from Dost's attempt to arrest. In the meanwhile Gulab Singh and Avitabile were despatched towards Kohat, and Ventura joined Ranjit Singh at Attock. Then some detachments were pushed forward from the remaining side to bring Dost within the artillery range. "The clever diplomacy of Sikh chief succeeded in delaying attack until the Sikh troops were

Diplomacy

Dost fled

concentrated", writes Dr. G. L. Chopra. Dost was now left with no option but to fight or retreat and he preferred the latter course, leaving the field in the night of May 11, 1835, with his bag and baggage. Thus, the "political intrigues of the sikh ruler causing treachery in the domestic circles of the Amir resulted in the breaking up overnight of a vast concourse of the Afghans, which was being viewed by the Sikh rank and file with so much dismay".

Sultan Mohamad and his brothers Pir Mohamad and Syed Mohamad relinquished their claims upon Peshawar, but the districts of Hashtnagar, Kohat and Nakko were given to them in return for a tribute. And they also engaged themselves to watch for the Maharaja the future plans of the Dost Mohamad.

Dost Mohamad took some time to recover from this shock, and in the meanwhile Ranjit Singh completed a fortress at Shabkadar by the middle of 1836, thus giving the Sikhs the command of one of the most practicable routes across the mountain ranges for transport of artillery from Peshawar to Jallalabad. Soon the construction of another fort was undertaken at Jamrood, at the very mouth of Khyber Pass.

Jagirs granted

Forts

Early in 1837, when the marriage of prince Nau Nihal Singh fell due, Hari Singh Nalwa sent his forces to be present at Lahore. Just this time, Mr. Fast, who was previously in the service of the British Government in India, passed by Jamrood, on his way to see Mohamed Akbar Khan, the son of Dost Mohamad. Seeing the unprotected condition of the fort at Jamrood, he suggested to take the opportunity and attack. The suggestion was taken, and Akbar Khan collecting some distinguished Afghan soldiers, picked a quarrel by preventing the Sikhs from taking water from a near-by stream, and soon

Nau Nihal's marriage.

Akbar Khan attacked

1. K. R. Sethi, 'Lahore Darbar'.

Sikh
victory

the quarrel developed into the historic engagement of April 30, 1837. Heavy casualties were suffered by both the sides. But ultimately the retirement of the Afghans into the hills, showed that the day remained with the Sikhs.

Nalwa
killed

The loss suffered in this battle by the Sikhs, however, was heavy. Hari Singh Nalwa sent an S.O.S., to the Maharaja to send his forces back from Lahore, but his letter was not forwarded by ill-meaning Dogra chiefs to the Maharaja. The forces could not reach in time and Nalwa laid down his life in the battle field.

Total
territory

It was a great victory for Maharaja Ranjit Singh indeed, and Peshawar remained a part of the Sikh empire ever after this and with their downfall it passed to the British and ultimately to Pakistan with the partition of India. But the Maharaja had to pay a very heavy price for it in the life of his most favourite General Hari Singh Nalwa. When the Maharaja heard the news of Nalwa's death, thus writes Kanheya Lal, he shed tears from the eyes of his soul and heart in his memory.

General
Picture

Thus, after all these conquests and annexations, when Ranjit Singh died in 1839, his kingdom occupying an area of 1,40,000 square miles, extended in the North, on one side up to Ladakh, and on the other upto the Sulaiman Mountains. On the South-East it extended upto Sutlej and on South-West upto, but not including, Shikarpur. Thus did Ranjit Singh convert a race of free booters into an imperial race, and out of the ruins of the Mughal empire, and chaos that was created by the Afghan invasions, he proved to be the first non-Muslin monarch after Anangpal, who succeeded "in inaugurating a power in Punjab, which, in point of military organisation and efficiency, proved decidedly superior to that of the Mohammadans in the North"¹, and which thus, would

1. G. L. Chopra, 'Punjab as a Sovereign State'.

remain a pride of the History of the valiant Punjab for the times to come.

D—The North-Western Frontier Policy.

After having discussed Ranjit Singh's conquest of the Afghan territories in the Punjab, it should be essential to have a review of his North-Western Frontier policy, to complete the study of this question. Through the History of India, the problem of the protection of this frontier, and its proper administration, has always been a headache to the Indian rulers. And Ranjit Singh could be no exception. According to one view, Ranjit Singh had a powerful ambition to annex Afghanistan to his authority, thus "fulfilling the prophecy of the law-giver in recovering the sandal portals, an exploit which would shed lustre on Ranjit Singh's action¹," thus avenging upon the Afghans for their invasions and exploits in India. And the very fact that he joined in the Tripartite Treaty, proves this assertion. But this does not seem to be correct.

Ranjit
Singh's
desire

There is no doubt that for some time, Hari Singh Nalwa had been advising Ranjit Singh for a forward policy and that his French officers too were anxious to try their hands in Afghanistan, as Ranjit Singh himself once told Wade. "The French officers tell me that if I place ten regular battalion, two or three regiments of cavalry, and a few pieces of artillery at their disposal they will engage to conquer Kabul and subdue the whole of Afghanistan to my authority." Ranjit Singh never seems to have entertained the idea very seriously, despite the prevailing chaotic conditions in that country, for a long time, from the death of Azim Khan to the accession of Dost Mohamad. And several considerations weighed with him in this connection. Firstly, the local climatic, territorial and geographical conditions, to which neither

Why not
desired ?

1. Political Proceedings, August 15, 1836.

he nor his sardars and soldiers had ever been used. Ranjit had already once experienced a disaster in Kashmir, in his attempt to conquer that valley, and was not prepared to repeat the blunder. Secondly, he did not feel himself to be strong enough for the purpose, which should have definitely aroused the jealousy of the British in India. Thirdly, Russia too should not have viewed Ranjit Singh's increasing influence on this side with friendly eyes, nor was Ranjit Singh himself willing very much to bring his frontiers closer to those of Russia in any way. And fourthly, there were powerful frontier tribes who could never have been tamed, and without which, his occupation of Afghanistan should only have spelled disasters for him.

Not directly.

He, therefore, like a wise statesman, contented himself with the conquests in these regions, such as those of Bannu, Kohat, Tonk, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Peshawar. But here again he preferred to rule through local Mohammedan chiefs in return for tributes than annex the territories directly to his authority. We have studied the conquest of Peshawar for instance. Till the year 1834, he continued appointing locally important Mohammedan chiefs at its governors. Only when he was fully satisfied with the possibility of annexing and keeping it within his control, that in that year he sent a strong expedition and annexed the territory.

His policy towards the border tribes too was tempered only with moderation and thoughtfulness. This policy could be termed as a 'tip and run' policy and it was the same policy which the British later followed in the North-East towards the Nagas and in the North-West towards these tribes. It meant keeping these tribes in awe by sending occasional and powerful expeditions, but never attempting to bring them under regular governmental control. He built several forts in this area, which besides

'Tip and run'

Built many
forts.

helping in defence against Afghanistan, and in the collection of tributes etc. were calculated to keep these tribes down. Such forts were for instances, built at Nara, Darma, Maru and Satana. Forts at Machin and Sikham, were built to fortify Peshawar. Forts also existed at Khairbad, Jahangira, Shabkudur and Attock, and they were also built at Manshera, Nawasahr and Haripur. Besides Ranjit Singh organised powerful moveable columns, which helped keeping the tribal people down.

Moveable
columns.

Still, however, Ranjit Singh does not seem to have been successful in maintaining perfect peace in this country. In several clashes with these tribes, some of the most important Sikh generals and officers, such as Amar Singh Kalan, Diwan Ram Dyal and Attar Singh had to lay down their lives. Syad Ahmad of Peshawar too was assisted by most of these tribes to create serious troubles on the Maharaja's frontiers. Such troubles, however, rarely resulted in an ultimate loss of a territory to the Maharaja and the prophecy of Masson, which he made in May, 1835, that "Peshawer is the land of Egypt, the tribes of Peshawar the children of Israel and Ranjit Singh Pharaoh and the river Attock would become Red Nile if a Moses were found to overwhelm the Pharaoh in it¹," remained unfulfilled, as it was bound to be.

No perfect
peace

E—Consolidation and Administration of Kashmir and Peshawar.

A few lines regarding the consolidation and administration in Kashmir and Peshawer may be added.

I—Kashmir.

After the conquest of Kashmir, Moti Ram was appointed as governor of this beautiful valley. But this gen-

Moti Ram
Governor

1. Political Proceedings, May, 1835.

tlemen does not seem to have been very much successful¹, and was therefore soon recalled. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was appointed the next governor, who seems to have been a very considerable success.

Hari Singh Nalwa reached Srinagar on August 24, 1820. During the time of Moti Ram much of revenue had fallen into arrears and some chiefs were getting restive under the Sikh rule. The first thing that the Nalwa sardar therefore did was that he issued a general announcement, promising welfare work for the general uplift of the masses, and warning that arrears of revenue should be paid early lest some serious action should be taken against the defaulters,

Hari Singh
Nalwa

Baramula

Khakhes
Bubes.

Reforms

Baramula was getting rebellious. He marched his forces on that territory, and not only did he realise arrears of revenue, he also imposed a fine of Rs. 5 per family as an indemnity. After this he marched secretly during the night on some people known as Khakhas and Bubes², on both the banks of the river Jhelum, who under their leaders, Raja Gulam Ali Khan Khakha and Zulfikar Ali Khan Buba, respectively, had repeatedly defied the government's orders to pay revenue and submit their accounts. Both the leaders were captured and sent to Lahore in chains. Heavy securities were taken from other leaders and thus they were brought under subjection.

Hari Singh Nalwa is said to have introduced many social, administrative and economic reforms in the country. The system of Forced Labour, which was said to have

1. See Maulvi Muhammad Din, 'Mukamal Tarikh-i-Kashmir', Part III, p. 16. It is wrong to say that Moti Ram himself resigned.

2. Khakha is the first letter of the word Khatri, if written in Punjabi, and Buba, the first letter of the word Brahmin, if so written. These people had been converted into Islam from Khatris and Brahmins respectively, and hence they kept these words as parts of their names.

prevailed from the time of Shankar Verma, who was ruling the valley in the first decade of the 10th century A. D., was abolished¹. Hindus had been forbidden to wear either shoes or turbans or any other head gear. This was corrected. A general order was issued that those who had been forcibly converted into Islam under Muslim rule, were free to come back to Hinduism or Sikhism. Thus about 40,000 persons are said to have come back from Islam. Of those who did so, a special mention may be made of the names of Pandit Ved Ram Matu and Pandit Sukh Ram Sarup².

Of the several economic reforms introduced, the more important were, that under the Pathans, the wool production of the country had fallen considerably. The rate of grazing tax was reduced and liberal economic aid was given to graziers to improve this industry.

Different weights and measures had been prevailing in the country which were brought to uniformity. The following uniform weights were introduced.

17 Tolas equal to 1 Pao.

6 Pao equal to 1 Manota.

4 Manotas equal to 1 Tarak

16 Taraks equal to 1 Kharwar.

Wool production

Uniform weights and measures

Yard divided into 16 girhas was legalised as a regular measure.

The number of floating gardens had been falling due to heavy rate of impositions. This rate being reduced, inducements were given towards developing more of floating gardens, thus adding to the beauty and resources of the valley.

Floating gardens,

1. See Har Gopal, 'Tarikh-i-Kashmir, pp. 66—67.

2. See 'Twarikh-i-Kashmir, pp. 177—178. This gentleman, with whole of his family, had been mercilessly forced into Islam by Muhamad Azim Khan.

Saffron

The growth of saffron, for which Kashmir has the privilege of being the only country whole over the world¹, had been falling. The peasants of Pampur area, where saffron is grown, were called at a gatehring, their difficulties and complaints were heard, after which by reducing rate of land revenue, and by other measures, they were encouraged to increase the area of land under this crop.

Paper-making

The paper making industry and other industries were encouraged. The different types of paper produced in Kashmir, in the Nawab's time were. Dahmsati, Hastmasti, Kalamdani and Sher Jangi etc.

Rate lowered

The rate of Land Revenue was also lowered. Thus where as Kashmir paid a land reuuenue of Rs. 15,52,825. under Akbar, accoording to Sir W. Lawrence, it paid Rs 60, 00, 000 under the Pathan². Under Dewan Moti Ram it paid Rs. 21,00,000. But Hari Singh reduced it to a mere sum of Rs. 13,00,000.

Division

The country, according to Moorecraft, had been divided into 20 parganahs. It had 20 collecters, 10 thanas and 400 inhabited villages.

Hari Singh coins.

3 types of coins

Ranjit Singh was said to have been so much pleased with the Nalwa in Kashmir. that he gave him the unique honour of striking coins in his own name. Thus three different types of coins were in use in Kashmir. (1) The old rupee, minted in Kashmir and having the name of the Emperor of Delhi. It was valued at 10 annas in Hindustani rates. (2) Nanak Shahee, which was valued at 14½ annas in Delhi, but was current throughout Ranjit Singh's dominion at 16 annas. (3) Hari Singhi, which

1. It is also perhaps grown in Iran, but it is of low quality.

2. 'The Valley of Kashmir'.

the words 'Sri Akal Jiu' with 'Samat 1878,' on one side and the words 'Hari Singh' and 'yak rupiya' on the other.

After Ranjit Singh had acquitted himself so well in Kashmir and after the valley had been thoroughly consolidated, he was recalled¹ for 'more important assignments,' and Dewan Moti Ram was re-appointed as governor of the valley. The Nalwa Sardar left Kashmir on November 6, 1821.

Nalwa recalled

II—Peshawar.

In his administration of Peshawar, Ranjit Singh permitted considerable local independence. Under the Sikh supremacy the chief Khans continued enjoying their powers to impose taxes, fines and punishments, even capitally.

Local inde-pendence

Hari Singh Nalwa was appointed as its governor, after its conquest, and he was as great a success here, in respect of administration, as he had been in Kashmir. The first thing that he did here was the abolition of the payment of the hated jazia, which every Hindu had to pay personally, at the rate of one Dinar a year. Hindus had been paying jazia from the time of Aurangzeb. According to Maulvi Mir Ahmed², he imposed a fine of Rs. 4 per Muslim family a year, to make up the deficiency. But the facts show that it was realised only from those who did not pay land revenue.

Nalwa Governor Jazia

The country was divided into five parganas, each of which was formed out of different important chiefs. Thus (1) Parganah Khalsa, Akarpura and Pubi etc. was held by Sayin Ditta. (2) Hashat Nagar was held by Syed Muhamad Khan and Sultan Muhamad as jagir. (3) Dauzai was held by Sunder Das Gopal Dass Peshoria.

Country divided.

1. According to some writers Nalwa recalled, because Faqir Aziz-ud-din and some others objected that a military chief had been given governorship.

2. 'Twarikh-Sarhad', p. 149.

(4) Muhamad Malik was held by Hazar Khani, and (5) Khalil by Arbad Muhamad Khan Khalil.

Assesment
lenient.

These chiefs paid $\frac{1}{5}$, $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{6}$ of total produce, according to the fertility of the land, to the government. And this rate, according to Dr. Gulshan Lal Chopra¹, was lenient as compared to that of the old rulers. Canals and wells were also dug for irrigation and thus the people were satisfied.

Total

The total income from revenue in Nanakshahi from Peshawar was said to have been Rs. 13,39,057; and expenditure Rs. 10,74,081, thus giving a net surplus of Rs. 2,64,976.

Nalwa
Coins

Pleased with Nalwa's success, Ranjit Singh gave him the honour of striking coins in his own name here as well. Still, however, perfect peace, in a country where murders depredations and feuds were the part of ordinary life, could not have been possible. Thus in the words of the Attock District Gazetteer. "The authority of the Lahore Government was always admitted and often asserted but subject to that admission the people were left to wrangle among themselves and to settle their own disputes with sword and dagger²." The Lahore Government did as much as it possibly could, to establish value for human life and peace, but national characters formed through centuries, can not be changed in short period of a couple of years.

No perfect
peace

1. Punjab as a Sovereign State, p. 130.
2. Attock D. G. 1907, Part A, p. 39.

CHAPTER VI

The Anglo-Sikh Relations.

(A)—Till 1809

Ranjit Singh had a very strong desire to unite whole of Punjab under his banners, and this could be possible only if he occupied cis-Sutlej States. But here the affairs were more complicated than he could expect. A short study of his relations with English till 1809 will justify the remarks.

As late as till fifties of the 18th century, we learn that English had a very slight knowledge of sikhs. Franklin wrote then that the "Sikhs are in their persons tall,... their aspect is ferocious, and their eyes piercing;... they speak the language of Afghans;...their collected army amounts to 250,000 men, a terrific force, yet from want of union not much to be dreaded!" This was an estimate of the sikhs when Ranjit Singh had not yet been born.

A more judicious observance of sikhs was however made only by Forster in 1783, when he estimated more surely the real character of sikhs, and prophesied that an able chief would one day probably attain to absolute power on the ruins of the rude commonwealth. Warren Hastings, the founder of British empire in India, although far off from the regions of Punjab as yet, advised his government in 1784 to take "reasonable means of opposition...not to permit the (sikh) people to grow into maturity without interruption." It was a clear writing on the wall, therefore, that Ranjit Singh was not going to have very good circumstances on the East.

Sikhs not well known

Forster's view.

1. Franklin's 'Shah Alum', pp. 175—178.

First contact
1800

British Policy

Munshi Yusof Ali's mission

The first direct contact between English and the Sikhs was established in 1800. The principle of the British policy towards Sikhs at this time seems to have been one of making the growing Sikh State of Ranjit Singh, a buffer State between English and Russia, who was developing her ambitions in the Middle East. Russia could contact Persia and Afghanistan and attack India, and in 1771 Gen. Barker had already written to Jhanda Singh Bhangi: "It is clear that as the Khalsa army is on the watch, no one can march on Hindustan unopposed." Moreover the British were desirous that if at all a war had to be fought with Russia, that should be fought only in Punjab or beyond that if possible. The British were harbouring yet another apprehension in their mind. They had not yet consolidated their power in India, where the people, more specially the Muslims, being anxious to throw off their yoke could easily be exploited of Russians and Afghans, if they occupied Punjab.

After capturing greater part of Northern and Southern India, more particularly after Anglo-Oudh treaty of friendship, English had naturally to turn their attention towards the North-Western frontiers. Under Lord Wellesley in 1800, a definite opportunity had offered itself when India was threatened by an invasion of Zaman Shah the Afghan ruler, who had been invited by Sultan Tipu, a bitter enemy of the British. As a precautionary measure the British sent Munshi Yusof Ali to the court of Ranjit Singh, with big presents, to request him not to help Zaman Shah in case of his invasion. Soon however, we learn, the danger of Zaman Shah's invasion receded and Yusof Ali was called back by the British.

This was the first Anglo-Sikh acquaintance of which the historians do not seem to have taken much notice.

Second Contact 1805.

Towards the beginning of the 19th century, the conflict between the two giants, English and the Marathas, for

supremacy in India, had sharpened. Both of the two Maratha chiefs, Mahad Ji Seindia and Jaswant Rai Holkar, had developed their influence far and wide, but none of them was a match to the seasoned British diplomacy. When the contest between the two powers developed, both the Maratha chiefs requested Ranjit Singh's help against the English. At first it was Seindia who, after extending his way over the regions north of Delhi, contacted the Sikhs through his French generals Peron and Bourquin. But Ranjit Singh was too shrewd a man to do more than what his capabilities permitted for. Soon after, Seindia was defeated by the English, and his power was exterminated from the political field.

With Jaswant Rao Holkar, however, the story was different. Although the Maratha chief was defeated by the English at Dig and Ferrukhabad by Gen. Lake, yet real complications arose when Holkar fled to Punjab and requested for Ranjit Singh's help. This happened in 1805. Gen. Lake wrote to Ranjit Singh forthwith that if he did so he would be responsible for the consequences. For a time Ranjit Singh was undecisive and to consult some other important Sikh chiefs, he called a meeting of the Gurmata at Amritsar¹. Majority of those who were present in the meeting, and particularly the chiefs such as Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, advised Ranjit Singh not to spoil his relations with the English, which he accepted.

Although a sort of understanding between English and Holkar had also been reached on 24th December 1805, yet on 1st January 1806, General Lake signed an agreement with Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh jointly which provided that Ranjit Singh would compel Holkar to retire from Amritsar, and would not give him any help. The soldiers of the Maratha chief, who had been defeated

Holkar
requested
help

No help

Agreement
with British
1806

1. This is said to have been the last meeting of this Central Assembly of the Sikhs, which after this was dissolved by Ranjit.

by the English at Ferrukhabad and Dig, were, it was learnt, discouraged and wanted to go back to their country. Ranjit Singh was not only to permit them go but also would give them facilities and encouragement towards this direction.

On the other hand it was laid down that the British would withdraw their forces from Punjab and also that they would not permit the Maratha chief to molest Punjab regions. The British would never attack the territory of Ranjit Singh if he remained friendly towards them. According to Latif, Ranjit Singh himself proposed beside this, that, the British could have their control over the cis-Sutlej regions if they liked. Ranjit Singh would not intervene.

Its Importance

Chief importance of this treaty says Payne, was that it brought English in a regular contact with the Sikhs. Now the ground was cleared for the further development of the Anglo-Sikh relations.

Justifications.

Different comments have been forwarded on this alliance of Ranjit Singh. It is said that this was a golden opportunity for Ranjit Singh, who should have helped Holkar crush the English and thus exterminate their power. But those who criticise the agreement on this score do not seem to realise that at this time Ranjit Singh's was an infant State, which he could not afford to put to any risk. Nor was he ignorant of the fundamental principle of political strategy that Punjab should not become a battle-field between English and the Marathas. Moreover, "what Ranjit Singh heard then from the Marathas, and what he saw of the disciplined strength of the British army, made a deep impression upon him,"¹ and he realised that friendly relations with such a power would pay him better than called for enmity. Nor could Ranjit Singh's alliance with Holkar be of much use,

Infant state

Not battlefield

British strength

1. Gordon 'The Sikhs', p. 91.

because the latter had thoroughly been weakened by the English. The chief sardars of Ranjit Singh's court were also not favourably inclined towards Sikh—Maratha alliance. Ranjit Singh "was dissuaded from this step, which would have at once brought him into collision with the English, by his advisors Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and the Raja of Jind.¹" Moreover, says Payne, had the Marathas established their power in Delhi, they being highly ambitious themselves, Ranjit Singh's consolidation in Punjab would have been impossible. And yet more, Holkar was not a reliable man and in his private consultations with his advisors, "Ranjit Singh called him pukka haramzada²," whose ambition was only to loot and plunder and nothing else.

Weak
Holker

Advices

Maratha
ambitionsHolkar not
reliable.

Cis—Sutlej Relations.

Now turning to the cis—Sutlej affairs, major portion of cis-Sutlej area, we learn, was under the Phulkian family, which was one of the most powerful of the original twelve Sikh confederacies, comprising of the States of Patiala, Jind and Nabha. Its founder was one Phul Singh a jat of ancient "lineage connected with Jesulmeer in the Rajputana desert," writes J. H. Gordon. Phul built a village in 1640, calling it after his name. He was patronised by the emperor of Delhi. "He embraced the slkh religion, and his seven sons became the ancestors of the reigning families of Patiala, Jind and Nabha. Other minor families sprang from them, all attaining to wealth and power³." Of all these states, the State of Patiala was the largest and the strongest. It had seen its palmy days under Baba Ala Singh, the grandson of Chaudhri Phul Singh. After the death of Ala Singh, his grandson Amar Singh came to power in 1765, and it was under him that this state became the strongest state in cis-Sutlej areas. He was given the title of 'Raja-i-Rajgan Bhadur'

Phulkian
family,

Its origin

Patiala
largest,Sahib Singh
weak.

1. Griffin—'Ranjit Singh', p. 170.

2. Khnshwant Singh p. 58.

3. Gordon, 94.

by Ahmad Shah Abdali. But the present ruler, Sahib Singh, who succeeded his father Amar Singh at the age of seven, was weak, and the State under him fell to its wretched days. Sahib Singh was always in conflict with his own wife Aus Kaur, of which the other states of Nabha and Jind wanted to take an advantage. Nor was the condition of the peasantry less pitiable in these regions. Sunk in their political intrigues and games, the rulers seemed to have little time to think of the agricultural developments of the country. There was no trade or industry which could enrich the resources of the states. All around there was a confusion and dissatisfaction, of which English, Marathas and Ranjit Singh were out to take an advantage.

A confusion.
Policy changed.
Ranjit encouraged.
Doladhi quarrel.
Ranjit invited.

In 1806, there seemed to have been an understanding between the English and the Sikhs that cis-Sutlej States could go under the protection of the former. General Lake on his way to Lahore, while pursuing Holkar, had been well received by the cis-Sutlej chiefs, in return for which, after the Anglo-Sikh agreement, Lord Lake gave them many territorial rewards and now began to develop intimate relations with them. But this policy of intervention beyond Jumna was not liked by the Directors of the Company at home, and it had soon to be abandoned before the English relations with these States would be regularised. This policy of non-intervention continued for some time, which gave encouragement to Ranjit Singh to proceed on his mission in these regions.

In 1806, there was a quarrel between Patiala and Nabha on a small town os Doladhi. When they could not decide the dispute between them, the Raja of Nabha along with the Raja of Jind appealed to Ranjit Singh to decide the dispute. Ranjit Singh was already in search of such opportunities, and marched towards cis-Sutlej areas immediately, along with Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and others like Gurdit Singh Ladwe. He brought with

him a force of 20,000 soldiers—too big, of course, for the problem he was invited to solve; and instead of deciding the dispute between the states, he invaded and occupied the town of Doladhi himself. He also realised a big nazrana from Patiala.

Occupied
Doladhi

On his return Ranjit Singh conquered Ludhiana, Dakha, Raikot, Jagraon and Ghungrana, but distributed those territories among the friends who accompanied him.

Subdued
other
powers.

In 1807 Ranjit Singh found another opportunity to march in the cis Sutlej regions. This time there was a quarrel between Aus Kaur, the queen of Patiala and her husband. She wanted to secure a good jagir for her minor son Karam Singh, which her husband would not permit. She invited Ranjit Singh to intervene on her behalf with a promise that if the dispute was decided in her favour, she would give him a valuable necklace and the famous brass-gun called 'Khuri-Khan.' Ranjit Singh of course accepted the invitation. But before he crossed the Sutlej, the husband and wife, according to some writers, had already patched up their affairs, but despite that he forced his reward out of the queen¹.

Aus Kaur
invited him.
1807

From Patiala, this time, Ranjit Singh proceeded towards Ambala, from whose chief Rani Dya Kaur, he realised a tribute. He also occupied Naraingarh which after conquest was handed over to Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. He also realised a tribute from Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal, from Jodh Singh of Kalsia and

1. Different version however are given of this expedition of Ranjit Singh. According to one it was Rani who invited Ranjit Singh as explained above. According to the second, it was Raja Bhag Singh, who being threatened by the chiefs of Thanesar, Kythal and Rani Aus Kaur, invited Ranjit. According to the third Sahib Singh invited Ranjit for help against his queen and his son Karam Singh. The view expressed above however seems to be more correct.

Occupied
many
territories.

many other Sirdars and zamindars a long list of whom is given by Dewan Amar Nath. Among these chiefs, those of Mani Majra and Ropar were important. Ranjit Singh also occupied Wadni, Zira and Kot Kapura. Zira was given to Muhkam Chand and Wadni in Ferozepur to Sada Kaur, his mother-in-law.

A dismay

This naturally produced dismay among the chiefs of cis-Sutlej States. They held a conference among themselves and went to Mr. Seton, the British resident at Delhi, appealing him for British protection against Ranjit Singh. Their argument was that the cis-Sutlej regions had always been protected by Delhi government, and now since Delhi was itself under the English protection, the English should extend their protecting hand on their states as well. But this was the time when Mr. Seton could give them no definite assurance for British help, however willing he might have been to extend the British influence towards this side.

In vain

Thus writes Mr. Latif, the English did wish "to limit the ambition of the Maharaja to the north of the Sutlej. But at the same time...they were afraid of thwarting him so abruptly as to cause rupture of friendly relations and throw him into the arms of France." Napoleon was developing an ambition to conquer the British Island and had an idea to occupy their eastern empire. The British could ill afford to push Ranjit Singh into his camp. Thus according to Murray, although giving no assurance, Seton gave them a hint that in emergency they would not be deserted¹. His reply was cautious which according to Payne signified that "we can promise nothing definite but you have our sympathy, and we will do what we can²."

1. Ranjit Singh, pp. 64, 65.

2. Payne, p. 81.

But this could not satisfy the cis-Sutlej chiefs. In the meanwhile, however, Ranjit Singh sent his messengers to calm their apprehensions and they also seemed to have decided that instead of seeking protection from the British, if they could have the protection from Ranjit Singh himself, that would be better. Ranjit Singh and Sahib Singh of Patiala met each other forthwith and exchanged their turbans as a mark of perpetual friendship between them.

Ranjit Singh
and Sahib
Singh

Treaty of Tilsit.

Just this time there occurred an incidence in Europe which changed the course of History in the Punjab. In July 1807, Napoleon who had been fighting against Russia, signed the treaty of Tilsit with Tzar Alexander thus deciding the affairs with him. After this Napoleon decided to march towards east with the purpose of occupying the British Empire in India. The English thus being threatened, Lord Minto the then Governor General of India sent Metcalf to Lahore with two fold purpose, firstly to counteract the French designs in the Punjab and secondly to check Ranjit Singh's aggressive policy in the cis-Sutlej States. The purpose in the words of Lady Minto was "to woo the great Rajah to an alliance, while refusing him the increase of territory on which he had set his heart."

English and
Napoleon,

Metcalf to
Lahore

Metcalf met Ranjit Singh at Kasur on 11th Sept. 1807 and discussed the affairs with him. Ranjit Singh asked him to submit a written draft of the treaty that he wanted him to sign. The terms of the treaty according to the draft that Metcalf submitted were :

Metcalf's
proposals

1. Both, Ranjit Singh and the English would join their defence against France, and Ranjit Singh would check Napoleon from passing through the Punjab in case he wanted to invade British India.

2. The English would have a free passage through the Punjab in case of a war with the French.

3. Ranjit Singh would give free passage to the British forces in his territory and would extend all his protection on the British messengers, passing through his territory.

Ranjit disliked it

Terms of the treaty obviously paid no heed towards Ranjit Singh's personal ambitions and it is said, Ranjit Singh smiled and told Fakir Aziz-ud-din that how selfish the British were.

Forwarded his own

Ranjit Singh, however, expressed his readiness to sign a defensive alliance with the English but forwarded his own three conditions for doing so. (1) The English would not interfere in his quarrels with the Amirs of Kabul. (2) The English would not establish a friendly relation with that chief. And (3) Ranjit Singh would be recognised the King of all the Sikhs, including the cis-Sutlej chiefs, and Metcalf was also asked to accompany him in his cis-Sutlej conquests. Metcalf refused to sign such an agreement without the permission of the Governor-General, and according to Moorcraft, Ranjit Singh was so furious over the English interference in his cis-Sutlej affairs that only Faqir Aziz-ud-din "disuaded him from war¹."

Metcalf to accompany

Any way, asking Metcalf to deliberate over the matter and in the meanwhile to accompany him wherever he went so that the things could be discussed at any time, Ranjit Singh marched South of Sutlej. First he conquered Faridkot and Malerkotla, then Ambala and Shahabad and also realised a tribute from the Thanesar chief. "There was practically an earth-quake in the cis-Sutlej country," wrote Sohan Lal.

An Earthquake

Ranjit's purpose

Metcalf was accompanying Ranjit Singh in his exploits in Faridkot and Malerkotla, and this indirectly served a purpose of Ranjit Singh which Metcalf did not know.

1. Moorcraft, Travels, i. p. 94

Ranjit Singh, writes Griffin, "clearly kept the envoy in his camp to weaken the resistance of the chiefs and to obtain some sort of official sanction for his enterprise¹." Again, writes Latif, the "object of the Lahore ruler was to gain time and trick the envoy²." The Malerkotla ruler, we learn, actually protested to the British resident at Delhi, that they were helping Ranjit Singh against him. This seems to have astonished the British extremely, and orders were issued to Metcalf immediately to dissociate himself from Ranjit Singh in his cis-Sutlej exploits. Accordingly, when Ranjit Singh entered Ambala, a state seeking British protection, Metcalf withdrew to Fatehbad and remonstrated to Ranjit Singh for the political trick that had been played upon him.

French danger receded.

Just this time there was a Spanish uprising against France, and the relations between English and Turkey also improved, with the result that now there was no more a danger of France invading India. Emboldened by the circumstances, Metcalf asked Ranjit to accept the alliance on British terms, that henceforward he would not interfere in cis-Sutlej areas. Ranjit Singh was not prepared to withdraw from the cis-Sutlej states so abruptly and leave them in the hands of the British. And according to Griffin, he immediately called Muhkam Chand from Kangra, collected his ammunition and prepared for war. But he was too wise to take such a drastic step in practice. Metcalf himself believed that this action of his was only to threaten British into compliance with his own wishes. Metcalf wrote back to the Governor General accordingly and the latter sent an ultimatum to the Lahore ruler saying :

British asserted

Ultimatum

"His Lordship has learnt with great surprise and concern, that the Maharaja aims at the subjection of chiefs who have long been considered under the protection of the power ruling in the North of Hindustan and is more especially astonished to find that the Maharaja

1. Griffin, p. 178

2. Latif, p. 375

requires the assent of the British Government to the execution of the design. By the issue of war with the Marathas the British Government became possessed of the power and right formerly exercised by that nation in the North of Hindustan."

Ranjit Singh did not reply to this ultimatum immediately and in the meanwhile began to contact the Raja of Patiala for a common action against the British. But the Raja of Patiala had already been wooed by the British and promised all protection against Ranjit Singh. The delay in reply infuriated the British and, according to Cunningham, David Ochterloney was asked to march his forces and display his power at Ludhiana. Ochterloney reached with his forces at Ludhiana in February 1809 and sent a message to Ranjit Singh asking him to withdraw his forces from the cis-Sutlej areas and that on the failure to do so it would be assumed that Ranjit Singh did not care for their friendship.

Ranjit Singh hesitated for sometime, but finally on the advice of Faqir Aziz-ud-din agreed to the English proposals. Thus on 2nd April 1809, Ranjit Singh recalled his forces from Faridkot and on 25th April he signed with the British what is so popularly known as the Amritsar Treaty of 1809. Important terms of the treaty were :

The terms.

1. The two governments would maintain friendly relations with each other.
2. British would have no concern on the North-west of the river Sutlej, nor would they intervene in Ranjit Singh's relations with chiefs in those regions. Likewise, Ranjit Singh would now never think of the capture of the cis-Sutlej states, which would be declared to be under the protection of British.
3. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was recognised as an independent ruler and was to be in the list of active friends of the British.

Ochterloney's display.

Ranjit signed treaty

4. Neither side would keep a large army on its respective banks of the river Sutlej.

5. Ranjit Singh would not maintain an army, more than what was required for the internal peace and external protection, in the 45 parganas in the cis-Sutlej regions, which were yet to remain under his control.

6. Violation of any of the terms of the Treaty by any of the contracting parties, would make the Treaty null and void.

A Review.

Different opinions have been expressed by different writers on Ranjit Singh's signing this treaty with the British. Thus says Dr. Sinha, "Ranjit Singh suffered a diplomatic defeat and had to put his pride in his pocket and eat the humble pie". Metcalf also wrote that Ranjit Singh "is not famous for desperate enterprises." This latter estimate of Ranjit Singh by a man who was directly dealing with him and with whom Ranjit Singh professed to have established friendly relations by signing this treaty, can not but make us conclude that this action of Ranjit Singh was an open acceptance of a diplomatic defeat. One of the cherished goals of Ranjit was to unite all the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh, both in the cis and the trans-Sutlej areas under his own banner, but in this the Maharaja bitterly failed. Moreover the British came nearer Lahore, and at a place from where they could easily study the movements of Ranjit Singh and intrigue for the Lahore raj. Ranjit Singh's acceptance that he would not keep in his cis-Sutlej regions, forces more than in required number, was according to some writers, a check on his authority and blow to his prestige.

The claim of the British on the cis-Sutlej States, too, was on fictitious grounds, and betrayed on their part only a policy of 'might is right.' Just four years before the signing of this treaty, as S. R. Kohli writes, on the

Diplomatic
defeat.

Failed to
unite

British
nearer.

Fictitious
claim

intervention of the Home Government, the British Government in India had decided not to intervene in the affairs of the cis-Sutlej States, and we fail to understand, on what moral grounds could the British declare now that by "the issue of war with the Marahattas the British Government became possessed of the power and right formerly exercised by that nation in the North of Hindustan." The war against the Marahattas had already been fought and won by the British when they occupied Delhi in 1803 and when they signed an agreement with Holkar on 24th December 1805. If this victory of the English on the Marahattas was not an agreement strong enough to justify their interference in the affairs of the cis-Sutlej States in 1805, how could this argument justify such an interference in 1809?

Untenable argument. And again, the argument that since the cis-Sutlej States were under the Marathas, after their removal from the scene by the British, these States should automatically fall into the hands of the British, too, can not go too far. Every student of History knows that all these States had been a part of the Mughal Empire before Abdali occupied the territory from Indus to Jumna. After the decline of the Mughal power, it was Abdali who appointed governors for these regions and administered them, and it was later on from Abdali that the Sikh chiefs wrested these territories, and not from the Marathas.

The Marathas, moreover, were only imposters and not rulers of the states, nor could it be said that the cis-Sutlej States had definitely fallen under their control, or even under their protection.

Moreover, from geographical point of view, from cultural point of view, or from religious point of view, these States were akin more to the territories in the trans-Sutlej areas, than to those anywhere else. That this point was accepted by the British themselves, was proved when after th

annexation of Punjab, the entire cis-Sutlej area upto Delhi, and even including Delhi itself was put with the trans-Sutlej areas and the whole was declared to be one Province.

Yet more. Writes S. R. Kohli, Ranjit Singh's intentions over the cis-Sutlej States were not selfish. He was a man who during his life time never used his crown, nor did he ever sit on his throne, nor strike coins after his own name. The coins were rather struck after the name of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. If such a man wanted to unite all the Khalsa, including the cis-Sutlej States, under his banner, he was fighting for a national cause, and the opposition of the cis-Sutlej States was anti-national, yet more so when they sought the British protection.

Not selfish.

If with such reasonable claims as above, he could not succeed in occupying the cis-Sutlej States, it was clearly a diplomatic defeat of Ranjit.

But on the other hand some writers assert that this Treaty was not a diplomatic defeat of Ranjit Singh, it was rather a master-stroke of his policy that he saved the Punjab from the British hands at least till a few years after his death. Moreover, writes Cunningham, he got a *Carte Blanche* for realising his ambition in the North and North-Eastern parts of the Punjab. His Southern borders having been secure, he had no more to keep a huge army for protection against the British, and waste his money and energy on that side. This he could now use elsewhere.

The other side

A master stroke

Carte Blanche.

And yet more with enemies all around and with his power in the Punjab itself unconsolidated, it added greatly to his prestige by having established friendly relations with a power so big as the English.

Prestige increased.

- No alternative Be that as it may, whether it was a diplomatic defeat of Ranjit Singh and he signed the Treaty under duress¹, or it was a master-stroke of his policy, we can not but say that Ranjit Singh had no alternative to what he did. Ranjit Singh's was yet an infant State and to have challenged the English, who had come all the way from Calcutta to Delhi, and who had now established their power on whole of the rest of India, could not but prove suicidal. The "downfall of every Indian power, which has measured arms with us is a constant reflection with him" wrote Governor-General Auckland in 1838, and this was applicable no better to the conditions in 1838 than to those in 1809.
- Infant State
- British strength
- Untrained soldiers
- Moreover, Ranjit Singh's soldiers were no equal to the British soldiers in training and discipline, and this he realised himself. An interesting story is told in this connection by some writers like Latif and Gordon. It is said that Metcalf had brought with him some Muslim soldiers, and during the time his negotiations with the Maharaja were going on, the Muharram festival of the Muslim fell. To celebrate this the few of the Muslim soldiers decided to take out a procession. When this procession passed before some Gurdwaras in Lahore, moved by indignation some Akalis fell upon the Muslim soldiers. But the latter gave them a square battle with the result that a few soldiers as they were, routed more than a thousand of the Akalis who fled before them. This incident is said to have opened the eyes of Ranjit Singh. While on the one hand he praised the bravery of these soldiers before Metcalf, on the other hand he was convinced that he had to proceed

1. As it is clear from the writings of Osborne, who visited Ranjit in 1838. Osborne writes: "The conduct of Ranjit Singh was so unsatisfactory,that it was deemed expedient to advance a body of troops under Colonel Ochterlony, to enforce the demands, and to support the negotiation of our agent." —'Ranjit Singh', p. 12.

against the British very cautiously. The instance as to how the large armies of Holkar and Marathas had been destroyed by the English, too was before him. His maternal uncle, Bhag Singh of Jind, who being nearer Delhi, had studied the British strength more closely, also advised him against challenging this power. And besides, Ranjit Singh knew that the British were determined and had evolved out a definite policy of bringing the cis-Sutlej States under their protection.

In case of a war with the English, it was feared that all the cis-Sutlej chiefs would side with them, and within his own territories in the trans-Sutlej areas, too, says Sayed Abdul Qadir, "it was feared that taking advantage of his difficulties the half-conquered chieftains and tribes would break out into a rebellion against him¹." And yet more, "finding Maharaja obdurate, the British Government was likely to extend its protection to the rulers of Kasur, Multan and Jhang as well," the rulers, indeed, who were already anxious to secure that help against Ranjit. Nor were Ranjit Singh's financial resources and his arms supply anything comparable to those of the English.

"He never exhausted his strength in wild and hazardous enterprises, but restraining his ambition within the limits of a reasonable probability, they were not only so well timed and skilfully arranged as generally to ensure success," wrote Osborne in 1838, "but failure, (in the rare instance when he did fail), never seriously shook his stability, or impaired his resources²". And the greatest service that he rendered to his nation by not entering into this hazardous enterprise was says Abdul Qadir, that by getting a free hand for national development, he "was able to lift his people from the position of political adventurers and free lances and give them the status of imperial race³."

Enemies' advantage.

Finance and Arms

Within limits

A service

1. Centenary vol. of Ranjit Singh— Khalsa College Amritsar.

2. Ranjit Singh, p. 16.

3. Amritsar Cent. Vol.

CHAPTER VII

The Anglo-Sikh Relations.

The Cis-Sutlej Territorial Disputes.

British
suspicious.

Although "the Treaty of Amritsar marks the definite beginning of Anglo-Sikh friendship," yet for some time suspicions did remain. British were apprehensive that Ranjit Singh was yet making contacts with Sindhia. He also continued receiving agents from Holkar and Amir Khan for a pretty long time after the signing of the Treaty, and the British had definite doubts that the Punjab and Deccan might unite against them. They also believed that Ranjit Singh was making secret moves to induce the Sikhs of Sirhind against the British.

Ranjit's
apprehensions

Nor were the apprehensions of Ranjit Singh himself brought to rest. His fear was that the English had a definite ambition on the Punjab, and the Treaty of Amritsar would be flouted by them whenever they found the opportunity to do so. It was this reason that led him to build a small fort at Phillaur, a town on the Sikh side of Sutlej, only five miles from the nearest British station. Muhkam Chand, who was supposed to be the decided enemy of the British, was put in-charge of that fort, whose duty was to watch the British movements on the other side of the river. According to some writers, Muhkam Chand also used to receive there, the deserters from the British army.

The
relations
improved.

Soon, however, the relations between the two powers improved. In 1811 some presents were exchanged between them, and in 1812 Ochterloney attended the marriage of Ranjit Singh's son, Kharak Singh. Except a small difference of view on Wadni, as discussed below, these friendly relations lasted from 1812 to 1823, and it wa

during this period that assured of each other's good intention, both the sides diverted their attentions elsewhere to realise their respective territorial ambition. It was during this time that Ranjit Singh captured the States of Multan, Kashmir, Peshawar, and Kangra. And, as Cunningham writes, it was not long before "Ranjit Singh had become master of the Punjab almost unheeded by the English," which could have never been possible without peace on this border. Metcalf, before taking leave, had told the Maharaja that he would reap the fruits of this alliance in about 20 years' time, and the Maharaja told Wade in 1827 that "his words have been verified." The British also, being freed of any danger on this side, subdued Marathas, Nepalese and Rajputs and thus established their ascendancy over whole of Northern India, except the Punjab.

Ranjit consolidated power.

The Bitterness Again.

Close friendly relations between the two powers continued, as discussed above, from 1812 to 1823. But by the latter year, both the sides having realised their ambitions elsewhere to a great extent, turned their attention towards each other, and as a result, the bitterness between them developed again.

Wadni.

The first subject of conflict between them was Wadni. Situated in the cis-Sutlej area and held by a zamindar, Mian Naudha, it was secured by Rani Sada Kaur from Ranjit Singh in 1807, when the latter, as invited by some cis-Sutlej chiefs, led his expedition towards that side. Mian Naudha, in return for this protection, promised future fealty to her.

Mian Naudha

Protected by Sada Kaur

During the next expedition of Ranjit Singh towards this side in 1808, Wadni was again protected by Sada Kaur, to whom, now, an unconditional grant of it was made by the Maharaja against the payment by Rani of

Granted to Sada Kaur

Rs. 15,000. Mian Naudha was declared to be the Rani's Zamindar in 1811. But in 1817 when he died, his son was dispossessed by Rani, who now occupied the territory direct.

Sikhs
occupied
Wadni.

Ejected by
British.

Wade
favoured
Ranjit.

Govern-
ment's
arguments

The Rani herself was thrown into prison in 1821 by the Maharaja, who now sent his force to occupy the territory. The Rani, says Cunningham, appealed from her prison to the British for help, who accepting her as chief of Kanheya confedracy of the Sikhs in the cis-Sutlej area under their protection, ejected from the fort of Wadni, the soldiers of the Maharaja forthwith. "Ranjit Singh fretted and fumed but prudently avoided a collision with the British troops"¹.

Captain Wade, the British Superintendent of the Sikh and hill affairs at Ludhiana, argued that since Rani had held Wadni from 1808 under a sanad of grant from Lahore, and as the sanad was supposed to convey only life grant of the territory to her, on her death the territory must pass to Lahore. Moreover, while establishing Rani's authority over that territory after the Treaty of Amritsar, Ranjit Singh had obtained Ochterloney's permission to employ force on that side of the Sutlej. Nor had the vakil of Sada Kaur ever attended at the British political Agent's office at Ambala before 1822 without a prior introduction by the vakil of Ranjit Singh, which indirectly signified that Sada Kaur was a dependant of the Maharaja, with all her possessions in the cis and trans-Sutlej areas.

The Government of India, however, considered the Rani's protection of the territory in 1807 as an establishment of her personal sovereignty, and therefore its grant by Ranjit Singh in 1808 as invalid. And since Wadni lay south of Sutlej, and since Rani, at least once,

I. G. L. Chopra, Pb. Sovereign State.

had sought British protection, Ranjit Singh's claim over the territory could not be accepted.

Thus a bitterness developed in relations between the two in 1823. Shortly after, however, some sort of compromise was reached and in 1826, when the Maharaja fell ill, the Govt. of India sent Dr. Murray for his treatment and in 1827, they also accepted Ranjit Singh's claims on Wadni, Anandpur, Makhowal and Chamkaur, as recommended by Wade.

Wadni to
Ranjit

Ahluwalia Possessions.

Some difference of view also developed on the Ahluwalia possessions in the cis-Sutlej regions. Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, as discussed above, had been on friendly terms with Ranjit Singh and had also accompanied and helped the latter in many of his expeditions and conquests, like those of the cis-Sutlej area in 1806 and 1807. In 1825, however, some quarrel arose between the two and Fateh Singh fled across the Sutlej with whole of his family and took refuge at Jagraon. He also sent confidential messages to the British agents, Murray at Ambala and Wade at Ludhiana for British protection against Ranjit, who he wrote, wanted to confiscate his cis and trans-Sutlej territories both.

Quarrel
with Fateh
Singh

British
protection

Metcalf in his letter of 14th January, 1826 wrote to Murray¹ that although the British protection could not be extended on the trans-Sutlej possessions of this chief for obvious reasons, to his cis-Sutlej possessions the protection could be extended, and that too, for the territories (1) which he had inherited from his ancestors or (2) which he himself occupied along with Ranjit Singh on the basis of equality. But for those territories, even in the cis-Sutlej regions, which he had secured from Ranjit Singh as a grant, the British could guarantee him no help.

Metcalf's
proposal

1. 26/12. Metcalf to Murray, January 14, 1826, Pb. Govt. Records.

Ranjit
Singh
opposed it.

In the correspondence that followed between the Maharaja and the British authorities, however, Ranjit Singh claimed the protection of all the 454 villages belonging to the Ahluwalia chief, the districts of Jagraon and Naraingarh of which had been granted by the Maharaja himself in return for a nazrana from the Ahluwalia chief. His claims were supported by Wade, who in his letter to Clerk dated 10th January, 1828, argued that (1) when asked by Capt. Birch to send a vakil to represent him, Fateh Singh had refused it on the basis that he had already been represented through the Maharaja's vakil. (2) When in 1812, Fateh Singh sent his agent to Ludhiana, he was introduced to the British agent by the Maharaja's vakil, through whom he conducted all his affairs. (3) In March 1827, Fateh Singh returned to his possessions in the trans-Sutlej areas and there was a re-establishment of friendly relations between him and the Maharaja, on the basis of an agreement that clearly showed that the former was hardly better than a political dependent of the latter, and (4) the British had not interfered when the Maharaja directed the Ahluwalia chief not to proceed against Maha Singh Bhirog, a refractory vassal of the latter¹.

British
gave
protection

But these arguments were not accepted by the Governor General. It was argued that the correspondence between Fateh Singh and Ochterloney between 1809 and 1813 clearly showed that the former had agreed to put his cis-Sutlej possessions under the British protection. And moreover, the promise to extend protection had already been given in 1826 by Metcalf, shortly after Fateh Singh had taken refuge at Jagraon. It was, therefore no good to withdraw the British commitments. Thus on the basis of the distinction that had already been made by Metcalf, as discussed above, districts of Jagraon

1. Pb. Govt. Records, 96/4. Wade to Clerk.

and Naraingarh, which had been granted by the Maharaja to Fateh Singh, were declared to be under Maharaja's protection, and to rest of the Ahluwalia possessions in the cis-Sutlej areas, British protection was extended.

Similar disputes arose over other territories such as Sialba, Machchiwara and Kang possessions, all of which were decided in favour of one or the other power, as commanded by facts. In almost all these disputes Wade supported Ranjit Singh, whereas Murray opposed him. And their correspondence with the higher British authorities clearly shows that not very often were their views influenced by their personal prejudices against each other. And we learn that these personal animosities developed to such a length that at one stage the Government of India had to warn them to correct their behaviour.

Other
disputes

Ferozepur.

Of all these disputes, the more important was that of Ferozepur, a closer study of which clearly shows that as the time passed, the Government of India were abandoning their old attitude of sweet reasonableness. They wanted to occupy the city, and no reason or rhyme could stand their way, when they had decided to do so. "It also illustrates," writes Dr. R. R. Sethi¹, "the Sikh ruler's character; he gauged the extent to which the British would yield to his self-seeking demands, and when his hypocritical claims did not meet the arguments and determination of the Government he resorted to the artful method of preserving friendship by himself yielding." This view of Dr. Sethi may perhaps sum up correctly the attitude of the Maharaja towards the British on all the points of dispute between them which follow, but to call him hypocrite on this score will perhaps be an underestimation of the adverse circumstances under which he had to manage his affair. We do not, however,

British
designs

1. Lahore Darbar, p. 43.

intend entering here into a discussion on this point. The facts themselves will clear the position.

Importance of Ferozepur for the British.

Importance

The first importance of the city of Ferozepur for the British, as it is clear from the correspondence, was that it fulfilled satisfactorily the growing need of the British to have places of strategic importance for their expanding empire on this side, and their clear determination to hem in Sikh territory by constructing a fence of posts all along the Sutlej frontier. Murray¹ wrote as early as on 12th December 1823, that the Ludhiana post held by the English being distant from Lahore, it could not be very useful as a post of check or observation in time of peace. Nor could it work as a good depot in time of war. Ferozepur was superior in this sense. Being only 40 miles from Lahore, and with only one river to cross, it was important as M' Gregor wrote : "it appears advisable to have a force as near that capital (Lahore) as possible."² Moreover, situated close to the boundary line of Bhawalpur, it could help the English have an effective control over the cis-Sutlej chiefs as well as on the state of Bhawalpur. Ranjit Singh's movements towards Sind could also be watched. And commanding the passage to the great ferry station of Hari-ke-pattan, its commercial importance, too, could not be under-estimated.³

Back history.

In order to discuss the claims of the two powers on Ferozepur more correctly, it would be essential to remember a few facts regarding its back history. One Gurbux Singh, having his territory on the north of Sutlej, had acquired Ferozepur in 1771. About 1772, the Sardar having grown old, divided his possessions among his sons Dina Singh, Dhanna Singh, Gurmkh Singh and Jai Singh—

1. Pb. Govt. Records, 71/231, Murray to Elliott.

2. M' Gregor, p. 263,

3. Pb. Govt. Records, 71/231, Murray to Elliott, 12th Dec. 1823.

Dhana Singh receiving port and territory of Ferozepur. Soon after, however, Nizam-ud-din of Kasur invaded this territory and occupied half of its seven villages comprising the domain of Ferozepur. Kasur itself was conquered by Ranjit Singh in 1807, who assigned it as jagir to his co-adjutor, Nihal Singh Attariwala. The latter soon dispossessed Gurbux Singh and his sons of their trans-Sutlej possessions near Kasur. He was also invited by the Dogras of Ferozepur to dislodge Dhana Singh, but in this he failed. In 1808, however, Nihal Singh crossed the Sutlej again, this time accompanied by Ranjit Singh, and hemmed in the Ferozepurians, sharing with Dhana Singh, the produce of their land. In 1809 the British protection was extended to this territory. Dhana Singh died in 1818 and was succeeded by his widow, Lachhman Kaur¹.

Ranjit Singh's claims, which were argued by Wade in his favour, run as follows. Firstly, Ranjit Singh claimed that the Ferozepur Sikhs were among the oldest of his subjects. They, he claimed, were among the dependants of Nihal Singh Attariwala, his vassal from 1805. Secondly when the Ferozepur Sikhs and Nihal Singh fell out, the former, established themselves under Baba Sahib Singh Bedi. And later in consequence of their giving trouble to Ranjit's vakil, when the latter wrote to captain Birch to keep them in order, the captain wrote back that it was Maharaja's concern. Later, again, in the time of Capt. Ross, when Lachhmi Kaur the chief of Ferozepur appealed to the Captain against Dharam Singh and Khushal Singh, the other chiefs who were giving her some trouble, the Captain ordered the appeal to be handed over to the vakil of Ranjit Singh, who was The proper authority for this. And in 1824, when Lachhmi Kaur offered to hand over Ferozepur to the British, in return for an equivalent territory near her father's estate in Buria, it was

Wade
favoured
Ranjit.

Arguments

1. Ferozepur Distt. Gazetteer, pp. 25—28.

declined, because the Governor General-in-Council held that the "measure would doubtless excite alarm and suspicion in the mind of Ranjit Singh."

Rejected

But where might is right, no arguments are discussed. Lachhmi Kaur died in 1835, and Wade asked Mackeson to report on Ranjit Singh's claims. But the discussion was futile, as the British had a preconceived plan up their sleeves. The territory was occupied by them forthwith and in 1838, it was made a military cantonment.

Ferozepur occupied.

"With the loss of Ferozepur it appeared as if a pistol had been pointed at the temple of Ranjit Singh. He, however, swallowed this loss in a spirit of helplessness."¹

A great loss.

Weak Position of Ranjit Singh.

After studying the facts, Jaequemont, a French traveller, had concluded in 1829 that Ranjit Singh's opinion had decisively been formed on his utter inability to contend with British arms. And this was no exaggeration.

Did not help Nepal.

In 1815, Ranjit Singh had been approached by Pirthi Bilas, the vakil of Gurkhas, for a help against the British. The Maharaja expressed his inability, though later he expressed his dis-appointment when, after the Anglo-Nepalese war, the Gurkhas were driven out of the neighbouring regions. Again, although in the early stages of the Anglo-Nepalese war (1816-18) the English faced reverses and the Maharaja did realise their weakness, yet he did not take an advantage of the situation².

and benefit

Nagpur,

Baj Rao II

In 1820, Ranjit Singh did not respond to the entreaties of the ex-king of Nagpur for help against the English. Nor did he respond to the similar entreaties of ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II in 1822. Again, in 1825—26, when the British army was marching on Bharatpur, the Sikh army

1. R. R. Sethi, Lahore Darbar, p. 46

2. See Abdul Qadir, Amritsar Centenary Vol. of Ranjit Singh.

was ready for an expedition on Kashmir. The Bharatpur chief, according to Osborne¹, requested the Maharaja for help with a force of 20,000 soldiers, and offered in return an amount of Rs. 1,00,000 for every day's march of his soldiers with him, and Rs 50,000 a day when the troops remained with him but did not march. Furthermore, in the first Anglo-Burmese war (1824-25) the British armies suffered terribly in the jungles of Burma. But here again, writes Abdul Qadir², Ranjit Singh was too cautious to take any advantage.

"To one friendship," wrote Griffin, "the Maharaja remained ever constant; from one alliance he never sought to shake himself free." And this was never more true than it was in his relations with the English.

After the dispute on Wadni, Ahluwalia possessions and Ferozepur had been settled, there was peace for some time. But differences arose again, entailing an exchange of active and heated arguments between English and the Sikhs.

Fatehgarh.

Fatehgarh was a Garhi or a mud fortress only 25 paces square with a few attached huts. It was situated within, and was a part of, the city of Anandpur, over which the Singhpurias forwarded their claims.

The Singhuria Misl, founded by Kapur Singh of Fyzulpur³ village, had been expanded considerably by his successor, Khushal Singh, when he added to his possessions the districts of Jullundur and Amarkot, and the neighbouring territories of Rupar and Anandpur Makhowal. Kushal Singh was succeeded by his son Budh Singh in 1795, and it was this gentleman who had built this fortress in 1800 for the collection of rent from his

and Bharat-pur not helped

British failure in Burma.

Constant

1. Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh.

2. ASR. Centenary Vol.

3. Afterwards Singhpur.

neighbouring possessions. Harassed by Ranjit Singh, however, he soon left his trans-Sutlej possessions, took refuge in his cis-Sutlej territories, and made a request for British protection, which was given to him by Government's order of 11th July, 1810. On his death in 1815, and on the petition of his sons, Murray divided these cis-Sutlej territories, including this Garhi, among them. And this settlement was ratified later by Ochterloney in 1817.

Murray blamed Wade

For 23 years, till 1829, when Ranjit Singh's forces occupied it, the Garhi had been under a separate thanedar appointed by the Lahore Government, and had been inhabited by Sodhis and religious recluses. In 1829, Murray informed Frazer, the resident at Delhi, that the fortress had been forcibly occupied by Ranjit Singh's soldiers under the command of Chet Singh, who was accompanied by a peon of the Ludhiana Agency, proving thereby that Wade had some sort of complicity in it, and that the neighbouring chiefs had been severely alarmed by this.

Wade supported Ranjit

Wade in his letter, refuted the charge that any of his peons had accompanied the attacking forces, and held that although the garhi had been owned by Singh-purias yet the persons in its occupation on their behalf, were playing hosts to thieves and offenders. He further added, the order of the Government dated 14th Nov. 1828, had placed Anandpur under the supremacy of the Maharaja and the fortress was a part of that city.

Murray's arguments

But Murray maintained that the fortress was distinct from Anandpur, ruled by a thanedar appointed direct by Lahore Government. Being Singhuria possession for fifty years, it had been confirmed so by Ochterloney in 1817 and that in the list of the territories claimed by the Maharaja in 1809, there was no mention of this fortress.

To this Wade replied again that the fortress was a part of the town of Anandpur and there was no need of making its separate mention in the 1809 list. And the Ochterloney's signature on Murray's redistribution in 1817, was only attestation, and no confirmation of sovereignty on Singhpurias.

Wade's reply.

Be that as it may, the Government of India deputed Wade, Murray and Lt. Nicholl to make topographical survey of the territory. This was done and in the sketch map of Anandpur which was drawn by them, Fatehgarh had to be shown as part of the town. The Government declared, therefore, that since Singhpurias were Sodhis, and since all the Sodhis of Anandpur had already been declared by the order of the Government in 1828, to be under the Maharaja's protection, they held Fatehgarh as all others held their territories elsewhere in the town, under the sovereignty of Ranjit Singh.

Survey confirmed Ranjit's claims

Murray felt defeated and in a long letter to the Government he brought out the point that Singhpurias were not Sodhis, but of Jat extraction, and therefore the order of the Government of 1828 did not apply to them. The Governor-General felt convinced of Murray's arguments, but he could not reverse his previous order because immediately after that declaration, Wade had informed the Maharaja of it and thus had already committed the British Government.

Murray opposed it.

When, however, Wade was censured, he maintained that, it mattered little whether Singhpurias were Khatri or Jats. What mattered more was that Fatehgarh had been shown by the topographical survey to be a part of the town of Anandpur, and therefore it must belong to the Maharaja. Wade's argument, too, was strong enough, and it had to be accepted. So much so that later, when differences between the two had been resolved, Murray himself wrote in a letter dated January 3, 1831 to Wade that "I have now seen the spot and sense

but later changed

of right.....that Fatehgarh is a component part of the town of Anandpur under the authority of the ruler of the Punjab¹."

Talwandi.

Talwandi was another disputed territory. And this is important, not only for the acrimony that developed between the two powers, but also for the way the antagonism between Murray and Wade influenced that politics.

Its history Situated within the cis-Sutlej protected States of the British, Talwandi was originally held by one Mangu Khan, from whom it was wrested by Sudha Singh of Dhanaura, the Rajgarhia chief. Kang chief occupied it forcibly in 1803. But after two years, it was recovered with the help of Fateh Singh Ahlwalia, by Sodhis Jai Singh and Surjan Singh, who had been related to Rajgarhian family and who restored it to Mai Sukhan, the widow of Sudda Singh. British protection was extended to it during 1808-1809.

Sukhan died Mai Sukhan died in 1824. Sodhi Uttam Singh forwarded his claims to Murrary, but they were rejected and the territory was handed over to Sodhi Tilok Singh's widow Raj Kaur and her brothers, Didar Singh and Diwan Singh. But soon there was an internal dissension, taking advantage of which Uttam Singh occupied the territory in 1828. Raj Kaur appealed to the English, who got the territory restored to her. But Raj Kaur herself was not an efficient ruler and it was not long before the trouble rose again. This time it was the Rani's own officers who rebelled against her. But this time, instead of appealing to the English, she requested Ranjit Singh for help, who got once again, the order restored.

1. Punjab Govt. Records, 115/105, Murray to Wade, Jan. 3, 1831.

This led Murray to write to the British resident that Ranjit Singh's interference in the case was uncalled for. He forwarded that the territory had never been a dependency of the Maharaja. Nor had he mentioned it in the list of the territories he claimed in 1809. Moreover, he added, the employees of the Ludhiana agency had been bribed by the Lahore court not to intervene, and that of all the claimants of the territory, the claim of Uttam Singh was the strongest.

Murray
opposed
Ranjit.

Wade in his letter to the resident, in reply, challenged Murray to prove that any of the employees under him had been bribed by the Lahore Darbar. He declared that the Lahore agent had presented him the petition which Raj Kaur had made for help, and that the facts in that application clearly showed that she was a dependent of Ranjit Singh. Moreover, he added, the Sodhis had already been declared by the Government's order of 14th November, 1828 to be under the supremacy of the Maharaja, and there was no reason to deny him that claim in this case.

Wade
supported

The Government instituted an enquiry in the matter under Murray. But this complicated the matter yet more. Raj Kaur declared that Talwandi had been taken by Maharaja's forces violently without her knowledge. But this was impossible, as her application to Ranjit for help showed. And Wade asserted that it was under Murray's intimidation that Raj Kaur had said so. While this discussion was yet in progress, Raj Kaur's brothers Didar Singh and Diwan Singh Sodhis of Anandpur forwarded their own claims on the territory to Wade. And this complicated the matter yet more. On the further enquiry of the Government of India, whether the parties in possession of the territory in 1809, were Maharaja's dependants or not, Murray asserted that the Sodhis who were thus in its possession, were independent. But according to Wade, they were not, as Ranjit Singh and Ahulwalia's help in 1803-04, to Raj Kaur to get the terri-

Enquiry

Complications.

tory back from Sudda Singh of Dhanaura showed. Murray however, forwarded that such a help could be a help from one friend to another, not necessarily from a sovereign to a dependant.

Ranjit's claims

The British Government, however, agreed to Wade's views, and the claims of Raj Kaur and her brothers, and Ranjit Singh's supremacy over them, were accepted.

Dispute on Atiana.

Its history

Situated 15 miles from Ludhiana, the village of Atiana was one of the 47 places in the cis-Sutlej regions over which the Maharaja had forwarded his claims in 1809. It was then in the possession of Baba Ram Singh, whom Ranjit Singh claimed as his vassal. But the case was yet to be examined by the British. While the case was yet to be decided, in 1828 Wade learnt that the village was occupied by Sangat Singh on the plea that it was granted to him by Ranjit. It was astonishing to the British that Ranjit Singh should make a grant of and Sangat Singh should accept, a place which was yet under dispute. Asked upon, the Maharaja denied that he made any such grant. But the papers of the Maharaja and those of Sangat Singh were conflicting.

Be that as it may, after the Maharaja's denial, Sangat Singh was directed by the British Government to restore the territory to Ram Singh forthwith, and this restoration was later confirmed by the Maharaja himself.

English declaration of policy

This dispute was important because it made the English towards the close of 1828, to declare a point of policy, that no protected chief could ever accept a grant from, or interfere in the cis-Sutlej territories of the Maharaja, without intimating the Government. For some time, however, the chiefs continued in their old habit of visiting the Maharaja's court. But when in July 1829, Jaspur Singh of Nabha visited Lahore for the grant of a jagir from the Maharaja, the Governor General declared

once again in definite words that no cis—Sutlej chief could do so without British permission. Thus the policy was further confirmed.

This led to further widening of the gulf between Maharaja and the cis—Sutlej Sikh chiefs.

A Gulf

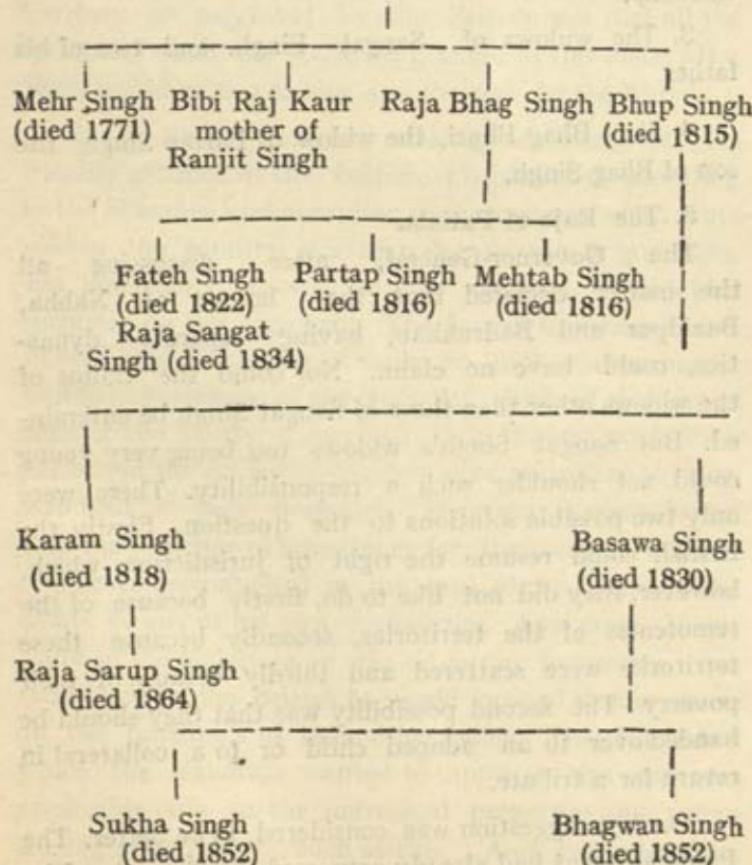
Successor to the Chiefship of Jind¹.

Raja Sangat Singh of Jind died on 3rd Nov. 1834, at the young age of 24, without leaving any lineal heir to succeed. Though according to the Sikh custom the State

Sangat
Singh died

1. Genealogical table of the Jind family (After Griffin, p. 310).

Raja Gajpat Singh (Founder)
(died 1789)



The
claimants.

could be treated as an escheat to the British, the latter permitted Mai Sahib Kaur, the mother and the Regent of Sangat Singh, when he was alive, to administer the State for some time under the guidance of clerk, their political agent at Ambala. This reticence on the part of the British, led many to forward their claims on the territory. They were :

1. Sangat Singh's second cousins, Sarup Singh, Sukha Singh and Bhagwan Singh, the Sardars of Bazidpur and Badrukhan.
2. Raja of Nabha, as a descendant of Tilok Singh, the grand father of Gajpat Singh, the founder of the Jind chiefship.
3. The widows of Sangat Singh, and two of his father.
4. Rani Bhag Bhari, the widow of Partap Singh, the son of Bhag Singh.
5. The Raja of Patiala.

The Governor-General, after discussing all this matter, declared that, the houses of Nabha, Bazidpur and Badrukhan, having separate dynasties, could have no claim. Nor could the claims of the widows other than those of Sangat Singh be entertained. But Sangat Singh's widows too being very young could not shoulder such a responsibility. There were only two possible solutions to the question. Firstly the British could resume the right of jurisdiction, which, however, they did not like to do, firstly because of the remoteness of the territories, secondly because these territories were scattered and thirdly because of their poverty. The second possibility was that they should be handed over to an adopted child or to a collateral in return for a tribute.

The
possible
solutions.

The last suggestion was considered to be better. The Political Agent had already expressed the view, that Bhup

Singh having set up a separate dynasty, did not dispossess his successors of this claim. And the Governor General agreed that Sarup Singh, one of the descendants of Bhup Singh could be the best choice. But it was declared that Sarup Singh would get only those territories which belonged to Gajpat Singh himself. All the territories conquered after his death would be handed over either to the British or to Ranjit Singh, as mutually decided upon. The settlement of the controversy between the English and the Maharaja however, took a long time, from 1834 to 1837.

The principle to be followed on the settlement of the territory, as suggested by the British, was that all the territories which the Maharaja granted to this house after 1809, would return to him and the rest to the British.

Ranjit Singh, however, taking advantage of the friendly attitude of the British, claimed that, according to the Shastras, and according to the customs which obtained in the country, if a man left no son or grandson, his inheritance passed to his nephews. Wade was surprised on this argument. The British Government forwarded that Ranjit Singh made no such claims on the ancestral possession of the cis-Sutlej chiefs at the time of signing the Treaty of Amritsar. Only the services of those persons in the cis-Sutlej regions were permitted to him, who held a jagir from him. Moreover, it was asserted that the principle of inheritance for the maternal nephew had never been applied in the case of the lapse of the estate of any of his own feudatories. And more. If this claim of the Maharaja on the cis-Sutlej territories, was recognised by the British he would forward similar claims on the territories of some other chiefs. The Hindu law which the Maharaja wanted to apply in this case was applicable only to the individual properties and not to the big principalities, such as this. And yet more, the British claimed that the lands granted absolutely in

The principle

Ranjit Singh's claims

The British arguments.

gifts without conditions, whether before or after 1809, could not be reverted to the grantee. Nor was there a law which could command that the donor could resume the land of the donee. And lastly it was asserted that, as an escheat, too, Ranjit Singh could not claim it, because he was not a Lord Paramount of these territories in the cis-Sutlej regions.

Sarup
Singh got
it

Ranjit's
share

British
share

Uprisings

A British
puppet.

Yet, however, the policy of the British was to remain friendly towards the Maharaja. And it was agreed upon that Sarup Singh would get all the territories which belonged originally to Gajpat Singh. All the grants of the Maharaja, such as that of Halwara, Talwandi and a moiety of Mudki and Ghiaspura, which he made after 1809, would revert to him. And rest of the territories such as Ludhiana, which were acquired by the descendants of Gajpat Singh, lapsed to the British as an escheat. A subsistence allowance was also granted to Sangat Singh's widows, to be paid partly by the English and partly by Sarup Singh.

Syed Ahmed of Peshawar.

Between 1827 and 1831, there arose another problem, which raised doubts in the mind of Ranjit Singh regarding the British attentions towards Punjab. There was an internal rising in Peshawar, headed by one Syed Ahmed. According to some writers, Syed Ahmed was a puppet of the British, through whom they wanted to keep the Maharaja in trouble. Thus according to one view¹, Syed Ahmed belonged to Bareilly, and was a British subject. He had organised a regular propaganda work against Ranjit Singh, at Patna in Behar and had many agencies at different places in India. The latter fact is confirmed also by Sir Charles Aitchison, in his 'Lord

1. Held also by Dr. Ganda Singh, 'The Br. Occupation of Punjab', 17—18.

Lawrence.' Moreover, they say that he informed¹ the Lieut. Governor of North-West Province regarding his intentions against Punjab, to which he received the reply, that the Lieut. Governor had nothing to say, so long as their own territory was not violated. If the British really had good intentions towards the Maharaja, they should have at least informed him of such developments.

But to an impartial observer these arguments do not seem sufficient to prove that Sayed Ahmed was a puppet of the British. At the same time, however, we can but conclude, that although the British may not have helped him actively, yet they do not seem to have been averse to such developments against the Maharaja. That the British did want to see that the Maharaja should remain continuously busy with some problems, is proved beyond doubt with Wade's letter of apprehension, which he wrote to Secretary saying that Ranjit now "will not be long before he directs his attention to another quarter." And again when in 1837, Dost Mohamad of Afghanistan wanted to re-capture Peshawar but was defeated by the Sikh forces, the British wrote him offering to mediate between the Maharaja and Dost Mohamad and thus help establishing friendly relations between the two. But the Maharaja expressed astonishment over such an offer and wrote that since the Afghans had already been defeated by the Sikhs, there was no necessity of any such mediation by anybody. Cunningham confirms that if the Maharaja agreed to some such mediations, the British intention definitely was to limit his influence on that side. But the Maharaja was too wise to fall into such traps².

Not proved

Yet British interested

in troubles
against him.

1. Mirza Hairal Dehlvi mentions it in his 'Hayat-i-Taiyaba.'

2. See Cunningham, History of the Sikhs.

Story of
failure

CHAPTER VIII

The Anglo-Sikh Relations C—The Sind Tangle

The story of the Anglo-Sikh relations with Sind, is the story of the Maharaja's failure against the superior political diplomacy of the English. It is a story also of how, to realise their own political ambitions, the British had little compunction in stabbing the friends and foes alike at the back.

Relations between Sikhs and the Amirs till 1831

The first important event in the relations between Punjab and Sind occurred in 1809, when the Amirs offered Ranjit Singh a defensive alliance against the English. But Ranjit Singh at this time, being in the thick of his affairs with Metcalf refused the offer, fearing a risk of the British displeasure.

The next important event occurred in 1818, when Ranjit Singh conquered Multan. The Amirs were alarmed when they found the Maharaja so near their boundary line, and their alarms were not baseless. After the conquest of Multan, the Maharaja actually started planning his expeditions on that country. He led his first expedition in that direction in 1823, with the pretext of punishing the Balochis who had attacked his troops near Multan, but in reality with an idea to study the situation in Shikarpur and occupy it if possible.¹ The Amirs sent, huge presents to the Maharaja to please him. But the Maharaja, in 1824, demanded from them an annual tribute failing which he threatened invasion. The Amirs naturally resisted and Ranjit Singh marched on them in 1825.

Marched
forces, 1823

1. See for details, Princip, 'Origin of Sikh Power in Punjab', p. 140

But fortunately for the Amirs, due to the famine conditions in that country, the Maharaja returned and abandoned the scheme for a time¹.

In 1826, Ranjit Singh claimed once again that, since he had occupied major portion of the territories held previously by the Afghans in Punjab, the tribute which after their subjugation by Nadir Shah in 1740, the Amirs used to pay to the Afghans, should now be paid to him. The proposal was again resisted by the Amirs. The Maharaja was just preparing for an expedition when his attention was drawn towards Peshawar, where Syed Ahmed was trying to organise a jihad against Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh remained busy with Syed Ahmed from 1827 to 1831 and after that when he turned his attention towards Sind, he found that the English had already stolen a march over him.

Claimed tribute

Attention towards Peshawar

Anglo-Sind Relations till 1831

The first Anglo-Sind contact is said to have been made in 1758, through merchants as usual, when some English merchants got permission to establish a factory at Thatta. These merchants got some more commercial concessions in 1861, but due to their distrustful political motives, the Amirs forced them to vacate the country in 1875. An attempt of the English to re-establish their commercial activities in Sind in 1799, failed. By 1807, however, the circumstances had changed. The British had established their power in India, from Bengal to the borders of Punjab. After signing of the treaty of Tilsit between Napoleon and the Tzar Alexander of Russia, the British apprehensions regarding Napoleonic ambitions towards India increased² and they forced the Amirs to sign with them a Treaty in 1809. This Treaty which was renewed

First contact 1758.

English expelled 1875.

1. See further Cunningham, p. 165; Latif, p. 433.

2. See above, the Anglo-Sikh relations.

Treaty of
1809

in 1820, provided that there would be an eternal friendship between English and the Amirs and that the Amirs would not permit any European or American to settle in their country, but each would permit the settlement of other's subjects if they conducted themselves in orderly manners.

Nothing important happened more till 1831.

After 1831.

Ranjit's
interest.
Reasons.

With the year 1831, the entire scene in the Anglo-Sikh relations on Sind changed, and now a period of intense diplomatic activity started between the two. By this time, Ranjit Singh's ambitions being checked towards the East by the Amritsar treaty of 1809, and he having realised his ambitions in the North-West by conquering Kashmir and Peshawar etc, and more particularly having slain in 1831, his formidable enemy, Syed Ahmed; the only outlet for his military activities now was towards Sind. Moreover, by this time, Sind had become a weak country, which could arouse the ambitions of any of the neighbouring powers on it. And by this time, when Ranjit Singh had conquered all the Afghan possessions of Kashmir, Peshawar and Multan etc. in Punjab, Sind alone could not escape his attention.

Military
outlet

Geographically too, Ranjit Singh was justified in aspiring to unite Punjab and Sind together, as Sind and Punjab had been having a common culture from the very ancient times, as proved by the discovery of the sites of Mohenjodaro etc. And yet more, Ranjit Singh realised that by conquering Sind, he would have an outlet on the Arabian Sea, by which he could have contacts with the over-sea countries, free from the English. But precisely for these same ambitions of Ranjit Singh, the British were careful lest he developed his hold over

Weakness
of Sind.

Geographi-
cal affinity.

Arabian
Sea

Sind. By this time also, the British had realised the commercial importance of Sind, and they had already planned—as it would be clear from a brief study of the question of Indus Navigation, given below—how they could realise their political ambitions through commercial games.

British
realised
importance

The Indus Navigation.

The British had been interested in the navigation of the Indus from the early years of the 19th century. They had been entertaining the hopes of controlling the Central Asian Markets, which was possible only through the Indus route. "The navigation of Indus," wrote William Moorcroft, as early as in 1809, "although little known to Europeans, as it had not been attempted by them..... is perfectly practicable for boats of considerable burden¹."

Moocroft's
suggestions.

There were, however, several other reasons as well, which precipitated definitely the British plan to navigate the Indus. Treaty of Turkomanchay signed in Feb. 1828, as in the words of Kaye, "delivered hand and foot bound to the court of St. Petersburg," the country of Persia². Russia was further aspiring for the exploits, not only in Afghanistan, but in Khorassan, Herat and India itself. The navigation of Indus could develop British contacts with all these countries and thus forestall the Russian moves.

Other
reasons

Central Asia

Moreover, just this time, a mission from the Persian ruler, Fateh Ali, carrying a proposal for the marriage of his daughter, visited the Amir of Hyderabad; and the British naturally grew apprehensive, that if both these countries became friendly, Russia could develop her influence on Sind, very easily through Persia. And again Russia already had commercial influence in Bokhara and the adjoining Khanates, which could be counteracted

Sind

1. 'Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab', Vol. II., p. 338.
2. History of the War in Afghanistan, Vol. I., pp. 151—156.

Commercial influence

easily by similar English interest in Sind and Central Asia. Another benefit of the Indus navigation would be that the disposal of the produce and manufactures of the European and Indian dominions of the British, would be facilitated. And again, the British did realise that Ranjit Singh had his ambitions on the country of Sind, through which he was aspiring to have an outlet on the Arabian sea, whereby to establish contacts with over-sea countries. The only check on Ranjit Singh, towards that side, wrote Cunningham, was "to open the Indus to the navigation of the world¹." Besides the secret purpose of the English, as confirmed by Charles Masson, was to encircle the country of the Maharaja², as Lord Ellenborough's despatch of October 1842, to the Queen confirms: "Lord Ellenborough looks forward to the Indus superseding the Ganges as the channel of communication with England, and to bringing European regiments and all military stores by that route to the North-Western Frontier."

But such a move on the part of the English, it was realised, would naturally be resented to both by Ranjit Singh and the Amirs of Sind. A very cautious plan was therefore needed, which was chalked out by the British authorities during 1827 and 1828.

Cautious plan

In 1827, Ranjit Singh had sent some presents to Amherst, the then Governor-General in India. The next year when Amherst retired to England, it was planned that the return presents should be sent to the Maharaja on behalf of His Majesty, the King of England. These presents would comprise of a team of cart-horses, one stallion and 4 mares, and would be sent through the

1. History of the Sikhs.

2. Narrative of Various Journeys, p. 432,

Indus, and 'the authorities both in England and India contemplated that much information of political and geographical nature might be acquired in such a journey. Burnes was put in charge of all these transactions, and it was planned that if the Amirs of Sind objected to his passage through Sind, he would say that there was a possibility of the carriage being sent to the Maharaja, being worn out if sent on road. Therefore its transaction through the river was necessary.

Presents
through
Sind

This shows, how in dishonest way the English were playing their game. Metcalf himself wrote later on that such a trick was "unworthy of our Government". Moreover, we learn on the authority of Mohan Lal, about twenty years before, a similar present had already been sent to Ranjit Singh on road². The excuse of the carriage's being worn out, therefore, was entirely fallacious.

Dishonest
designs.

Amirs as it was expected did object to the British move. And finally it was only on the threat of Ranjit Singh's forces, which incidently happened to be just nearby, in Dera Ghazi-Khan, that the Amirs gave their permission. Besides securing the threat of the Maharaja's forces, on the pretext of the necessity of the safe transaction of presents meant for him, the English secured a personal intervention of the Maharaja as well, who it is said, called the envoy of the Amirs to his presence and reprimanded him for the Amirs' behaviour. Ranjit Singh did all this, because he was already out to use any pretext for his designs against Sind. But little did he know, that in this case the British were firing their own gun against the Amirs, using so tactfully the shoulders of the ignorant Lahore Monarch. Ranjit Singh was flattered when Burnes brought the presents to his court, little knowing again, how bitter these sugar coated pills would be.

Amirs
opposed
but gave
way

2. Life of Amir Dost Mohd. Khan Vol. II, pp. 41—43.

Meeting proposed

Besides bringing presents, Burnes is said to have made a casual reference to the possibility of opening the Indus and the Sutlej to navigation. Wade who was accompanying Burnes, on his visit to the Darbar also brought with him a proposal to arrange an interview with Bentinck, the Governor-General of India, at Rupar, where Ranjit Singh would be received with all the pomp and show. The next day, the Governor-General would pay a return visit to Ranjit Singh on the latter's side of the border.

Ranjit's condition

Although Ranjit was anxious to meet the Governor-General and thus impress upon his enemies of his superiority, for having such friendly relations with such a big power in India, he could not understand the purpose behind this invitation. He proposed that the Governor-General should pay him the first visit and then he would pay the return visit. But Burnes could never accept this proposal, because, as Princip writes, the policy had already been laid down that "if contrary to expectation His Highness should persist in requiring the first visit, the negotiations must at once be broken off".

Rejected.

Ranjit Singh conceded, but very reluctantly and this shows clearly that the interview was to be used to show that the Governor-General had the higher dignity.

Meeting at Rupar

The meeting between the Governor-General and the Maharaja was arranged to be held on 26th October, 1831. But till the last, writes Gordon, some of his Sardars were very averse to it, fearing kidnapping. Maharaja's French General, Allard, tried to allay his fears, and at last he "proceeded in state with a large force, encamping on his side of the river, the British camp being on the other. The night before he was to cross over to the British camp he suddenly changed his mind, having been again warned that he would act unwisely in leaving his own territory to meet the English on their ground..... Allard argued

Ranjit afraid

Court Astrologers

1. Punjab Govt. Records, Princip to Wade, 1¹⁵/89, July 4, 1831.

with him to allay his apprehensions, and offered to stake his head that nothing unpleasant would happen. The court astrologers were summoned; after consulting their mystic books they declared that the British were his sincere friends, and that the meeting would lead to more valuable friendship between the two States, but they also advised him to hold an apple in each hand, and on meeting the Governor-General to offer him one of these, keeping the other himself. If it was accepted the meeting would be favourable, and the visit could be carried out without the least fear. The next morning, when he crossed mounted on an elephant surrounded by his sardars and escort of Allard's dragoons, on meeting Lord George Bentinck he presented the apple to him, which was at once accepted. Delighted at this good omen, he stepped from his howdah into that of the Governor-General and proceeded to the audience tent, vivacious and charming every one of his manners, full of inquiry about all he saw². For the pomp that was displayed at this meeting, the occasion has been styled by some writers as the Indian 'Field of the cloth of Gold.'

Apples scheme

Meeting held.

But Ranjit Singh had already been deceived and stabbed at the back, so much apprehensive of which he was. Ranjit Singh, according to Latif, had invited the Governor-General during his meeting, for a joint action against Sind. But the latter refused telling him that they were not interested. While lulling the Maharaja thus to sleep writes Abdul Qadir¹, the Governor-General let him know little that just 4 days before this meeting, Pottinger had already been issued the instructions, as discussed below, to proceed to Sind and sign with the Amirs a commercial treaty.

Ranjit deceived

1. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, pp. 107—109. See also Latif, Vol. ii, p. 452.

2. See Ranjit Singh's Cent. Vol., published by Kh. College, Amritsar.

Burnes'
report

Instructions
to Pottinger

Amirs
signed
Treaty

When Burnes reported favourably on the suitability of the Indus navigation, the Governor-General decided to launch his project forthwith. Pottinger was sent to the Amirs with a detailed plan for Indus navigation. He was thoroughly educated, as to how he would proceed. He would take guarantees from the Amirs against obstructions to the trade through the river. And in return he would guarantee against any loss of their revenue by the diversion of trade from land route to the river. He would also make the Amirs realise, how their people would flourish. And if the Amirs yet objected Pottinger was to say that the Amirs had no right to violate the international law by depriving all the States Son the Indus of such trade benefits, only because they happened to occupy a small portion of it¹.

These instructions were issued to Pottinger only 4 days before the meeting at Rupar, where as it is discussed above, the Governor-General lulled the Maharaja so sweetly to sleep. Proceeding the planned way, Pottinger at the last long, did succeed in making the Amirs sign the Treaty on April 4, 1832. The essential feature of the Treaty was that the Amirs would permit the British to carry on their trade through the Indus, but that no permission would be given for the transaction of military stores, nor would they permit armed vessels through it. Further it was expressly laid down that no British merchant would be permitted to settle in Sind, and this shows clearly how distrustful the Amirs were of the British designs A supplement to this Treaty, signed on April 22, transferred the final powers of deciding the levy of duties on the foreign goods from Amirs to the British.

1. See Punjab Govt. Records, 98/181, Govt. to Pottinger, Oct. 22, 1831.

All these developments, as according to Gough,¹ naturally aroused suspicion in the Maharaja's mind, and it is said, when he learnt of these transactions he could not sleep for several nights. Nor did he, writes Latif, "affect to conceal from the British officer (at Mithankot) the fact that the commercial projects of the British Government had compromised his political designs and operations West of Indus." When Wade² visited him the next, he was not received as cordially as he used to be. Ranjit Singh's view was that by signing that commercial agreement with the Amirs, the British had violated the Amritsar Treaty of 1809, and had interfered in the trans-Sutlej affairs. But the British view was that the application of that treaty ended, where Sutlej met the Indus, and below that therefore, they were perfectly within their rights to make friends as they liked. At last, however, the sweet tongued agent, Wade, did succeed in appeasing the monarch.

Ranjit shocked

Amritsar treaty violated

Wade soothed him

Sutlej navigation

Wade's arguments

After opening Indus to navigation, the next proposal was to open Sutlej for the purpose. For this Wade brought letters from the Governor-General, both for the Maharaja and Bhawal Khan, the Nawab of Bhawalpur. When enquired about, Wade argued that the Punjab was more prosperous when it was carrying on its trade with other countries and now again, if the Maharaja was a well-wisher of his country, that trade should be revived, more particularly the trade of Kashmir, which was said once to have been so important. And for all this trade, he argued, the best route to Amritsar and other important centres would be these rivers, because the land routes were dangerous for their being infested with robbers and thieves.

Wade assured the Maharaja that he would get a proper share in the duties imposed on such trade, and

Ranjit agreed

1. *Sikh and Sikh Wars*, p. 38.

2. He was political agent of the British at Ludhiana.

finally on 26th December 1832, he did succeed in signing the agreement with the Maharaja, and thus in opening the Sutlej to navigation. Nawab of Bhawalpur, whose territory also lay on the Sutlej, was made to sign an agreement likewise, and thus it was, that the whole of the rivers of the Sutlej and the Indus lay open to the British to play their commercial and political games, as they had desired.

Second Phase

Wade's suggestions

After signing these agreements, Wade suggested to the Governor-General that British officers should be stationed at several places on the line. He argued that the Sikhs, Sindhians and Daodpotras were hostile to one another, and if British officers were not stationed in their midst, their hostilities might hinder a smooth running of the trade. Secondly, by doing so, Ranjit Singh's intention to convert Mithankot into a mart for the produce of his own country, as against that of Sind and others, would be foiled. Thirdly the British purpose behind all this project being political, he argued that the presence of British officers would facilitate the realisation of it. Fourthly, the line between Mithankot and Shikarpur being at the mercy of the Amirs of Sind, the British would be able to protect it. And lastly he forwarded that Mithankot being a central place, if a British officer was stationed there he would be able to control and regulate whole of the trade.

Governor-General agreed

The Governor-General accepted these proposals, but to carry them into practice was not an easy affair. Amirs of Sind, more particularly, had their own apprehensions and they would not permit any English officer to be stationed in their country. Pottinger was sent to discuss the matter with them. But they could not budge from their position even an inch. When all the appeasements and threats failed, at last a compromise was struck and it was agreed that instead of a European, some native

Pottinger sent

would be appointed as British officer in Sind. And thus Indian officers
was the line opened for trade.

Despite all the efforts, however, this route could never become popular with merchants. Burnes was sent to Kabul to convince the Kabul merchants of its utility, but this mission too could not prove to be a good success and it was not long before, that this route, of the importance and utility of which, so much capital had been made, had to be closed.

The reasons for its failure were not far to seek. Of all the parties who signed this agreement, British alone were interested seriously in the project. But their action too was inspired more by political motives than commercial. Ranjit Singh, Bhawal Khan and Amirs of Sind, all showed their suspicion in the project; Amirs detained and delayed boats passing through their territories, and put all sorts of hindrances against the smooth running of the trade, despite repeated threats from the British. Thus the only purpose solved by the opening of these rivers to navigation, was that the Russians and the Sikh designs towards Sind were checked and as Charles Masson writes in his 'Narrative of various journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, the Punjab and Kalat':¹ "The results of the policy concealed under this pretext have been the introduction of troops into the countries on and beyond the river, and of some half dozen steamers on the stream itself, employed for warlike objects, not those of trade." But then as discussed above, this was the main motive of the English, and in this they were a success.

Indus route
unpopular

Reason

Political
success

Shikarpur.

Having thus established their commercial relations with Sind, it was now not difficult for the English to develop their political hold. In fact in the East, English politician had always followed the English merchant,

1. Vol. III, p. 432

and in this, Sind could be no exception. The question of Shikarpur facilitated their move.

Its importance

Shikarpur, lying West of the Indus, below Mithankot, was a place known far and wide for its being an important commercial centre. Besides, it had a military importance as well, for it lay on way to Bolan Pass, and for the protection of this pass, military centre was always established at this place. Ranjit Singh wanted to occupy the city for the obvious reasons, which the English, again, would not permit.

Ranjit wanted to occupy

Demanded Shikarpur

Mazaris, a tribe of free-booters, inhabiting some territory South-West of Mithankot, at a few miles distance from it, carried their incursions alike in Sind, Bawalpur and Lahore territories. But since they occupied the 'no man's land' between Sind and Punjab, the Amirs, despite their nominal suzerainty, could not control them. The incursions of the Mazaris in the Lahore territories increased by 1836, and Ranjit Singh decided to crush them once for all. Besides, taking an excuse for the losses he suffered due to their inroads, the Maharaja demanded Shikarpur from the Amirs. 'The British could have no reasonable objection to his occupying it. It lay to the West of the Sutlej-Indus, and, according to the treaty of 1809, they had agreed not to interfere with his affairs in trans-Sutlej territories'. The Amirs, however, appealed to the British for help, and the latter were already waiting for such an opportunity. On November 25, 1836, a Treaty was signed between English and the Amirs. Under this Treaty, the Amirs were obliged to receive a British agent, who would be a medium of communication between the Maharaja and the Amirs. The Amirs would also withdraw their vakils from Lahore. And in return for this, the English agreed to defend Amirs' territories.

Amirs appealed to British

By signing this Treaty, as it is obvious, the Amirs signed their own death warrants. And it was now a clear writing on the wall, that it would not be long before their power would be thrown into the dust-bin of history and their country would be annexed. To Ranjit Singh too, of course, it was a bolt from the blue. The atmosphere at Lahore was charged and the Sikh generals were anxious to try their hands against the English, for which they now felt, the last moment had arrived. In December 1636, however, Wade was sent again to soothe the Maharaja, and the latter once again, despite an opposition from his Sardars, gave way. According to some writers, Ranjit Singh had actually sent some forces against the Amirs, in reply to which the English sent a small contingent under Wade, and requested the Maharaja to withdraw, which, of course he did. Later on, when Wade paid his next visit at Lahore, it is said, Maharaja's Sardars such as Dhian Singh, became furious and drew out their swords, But the Maharaja cooled them by saying that if the English could defeat 2 lakh soldiers of the Marathas, their small army was no equal of them.

Dr. Ganda Singh forwards some definite arguments, as to why the Maharaja gave way. The British, it is said, were already in correspondence with Dost Mohammad of Afghanistan. In case of a hostility with the English, he would pounce upon Punjab. Moreover, the military strength of the Maharaja was only 20 percent of the total strength of the English. And when all the valiant Marathas, Rajputs, Jats and Rohillas had fallen before the English, the Sikhs were no stronger.

This was one more diplomatic defeat of the Maharaja and it, writes N. K. Sinha, "enables us to realise how impotent Ranjit Singh was so far as his relations with the British Government were concerned." In fact by

Sold independence

Shocking

Wade soothed him.

Justifications

Impotent

this time, as Baron Van Hugel wrote, "Ranjit Singh is as much independent of the British Indian Government as his position as a weaker neighbour can admit." It was wise of him, perhaps, that he preserved his patience and did not enter into wild ventures beyond his capabilities.

Nau Nihal's marriage

On 4th March 1838, the marriage of Ranjit Singh's grandson, Nau Nihal Singh, was celebrated, and the Maharaja, as usual, invited the Governor-General to attend. Sir Henry Fane was sent on the occasion and he was as cordially received as any such British agent had ever been received before, and it looked as if all the ripples on the ocean of Anglo-Sikh relations had died, and there was calmness again.

CHAPTER IX

The Anglo—Sikh Relations.

D—Shah Shuja's Bid for His Throne and

The Tripartite Treaty.

But such a state of things was not to continue for a long time. The sky was overcast soon, bitterness developed again, and Ranjit Singh decided to be bolder than before, and there was a possibility that open hostilities would break between the two powers. But before such a climax could reach, the destiny laid its wild hands upon the Maharaja and he was removed from this mortal world. A brief account of all these developments is necessary.

Bitterness again

Ranjit Singh's Relations with Shah Shuja before the Tripartite Treaty.

Towards the end of the 18th century, the Durani Empire of Afghanistan which had so ambitiously been founded by Ahmed Shah, began to rot. Timur Shah (1773—1793), Zaman Shah (1793—1800) and Mahmud Shah (1800—1803), were all inefficient and tactless rulers. Shah Shuja who acceded to power in 1803, was no better¹. Just when the Amritsar Treaty was signed between English and the Sikhs in 1809, Elphinstone concluded a Treaty with Shah Shuja as well. But the former had not yet left Peshawar, when Shah Shuja's brother Mahmud Shah captured Kandhar, and soon after defeating the former at Neemla, expelled him from Afghanistan.

Affairs in Afghanistan

1. For details see Cambridge History of India, Vol., V, pp. 483 etc.

Civil War

After this followed a long civil war, at first among the members of the Sadozai family itself to which Mahmud Shah himself belonged and then between Sadozais and Barakzais. At last the Barakzais succeeded in overthrowing the Sadozais, and parcelled out the whole country among themselves. Dost Mohmad, the ablest of all the members of this family, occupied Ghazni and Kabul, Kohin Dil Khan occupied Kandhar, and Sultan Mohmad occupied Peshawar. Only Herat remained under Mahmud Shah. Sultan Mohmad later submitted to the Sikhs, when the Sikh forces occupied Peshawar.

Shah Shuja interned at Kashmir

"Few monarchs and few men have been subjected to greater reverses of fortune than Shuja-ul-Mulk¹." Being expelled from Afghanistan, Shah Shuja took refuge and later on was interned at Kashmir. His wife travelled to Lahore, where she was given refuge by the Maharaja, who bestowed on her a good monthly pension. Shah Shuja himself was secured from Kashmir by the Maharaja, as discussed above, on the entreaties and promises of his wife that she would pay the Lahore monarch with the Koh-i-Nur in return. But later on this royal family of Afghanistan seems to have hesitated and began to forward excuses against parting with the celebrated jewel. It would be interesting to quote Osborne² on the subject. "In March, 1813," writes he, "Shah Shuja again came to Lahore, his wife having assured her husband that he would find a friend in the ruler of the Punjab. But he had no sooner arrived than a demand was made

Promise Koh-i-Nur

Hesitation

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1. Burns, Quoted in 'History of Afghanistan', Ferrier, pp. 143—145.
 2. Osborne was sent by the British to discuss with Maharaja, regarding the Tripartite Treaty.

upon him to surrender the "Koh-i-Noor¹", or mountain of light, a jagir being promised as the price of his compliance. The eagerness of the Sikh to obtain, and the reluctance of the Afghan to resign, this celebrated jewel appear to have been of equal intensity, but not so the power of the contending parties."

"No greater severity was employed, than appeared absolutely necessary to vanquish the obstinacy of the Shah, and none was omitted which promised the accomplishment of that end. The exiled family was deprived of all nourishment during two days, but when their firmness was found proof against hunger, food was supplied. It was in vain that the Shah denied that the diamond was in his possession, and having exhausted remonstrance, resorted to artifice and delay.

"Ranjit was neither to be deceived, nor diverted from his purpose, and at length Shah Shuja, wearied out by importunity and severity, agreed to give up the jewel. Accordingly on the first June, 1813, the Maharaja waited on the Shah for the purpose of the surrender.

"He was received with great dignity by the prince, and both being seated, there was a solemn silence which lasted nearly an hour. Ranjit then grew impatience, and whispered to an attendant to remind Shah of the object of the meeting. No answer was returned, but Shah made a signal with his eyes to an eunuch, who retired, and brought in a small roll, which he placed on the carpet at equal distance between the two chiefs. Ranjit ordered the roll to be unfolded, when the diamond was exhibited to his sight. He recognised, seized it, and immediately retired²."

Necessary severity

Solemn silence

Koh-i-nur seized

1. This diamond, writes Osborne, which is said to be an inch and a half in length, and an inch wide, adorned the peacock throne at Delhi, it was carried off by Nadir Shah, after whose death it was seized in plunder of Nadir's tent by Ahmed Shah, from whom it descended to his son, Shah Shuja.

2. Osborne, Ranjit Singh, p. 12.

Shah Shuja
escaped

Having thus been dispossessed of the diamond, and after some further mis-adventures and misfortunes, Shah Shuja escaped to the British territories, where the British Government assigned a moderate provision of Rs. 50,000 per annum for his maintenance, an amount sufficient enough to meet his requirements of food and clothes, and besides to indulge into the dreams of recovering his throne. This dream he actually tried to realize in 1818 with the help of Azim Khan of Kashmir, but failed.

Ranjit Singh's offer to help him.

Reasons

In 1826, Ranjit Singh offered Shah a help to recover his throne. Several reasons are given for it. At this time the conditions on his North-West Frontier were precarious, with the exception of Dera Ghazi Khan, Ranjit Singh possessed no territory beyond Attock. Subjugation of Peshawar was yet doubtful. Moreover all the area on the left bank of the Indus, from Attock to the boundary line of Rawalpindi, was occupied by the turbulent tribe of Yusufzais, a constant source of menace to the Maharaja. Nor was his sovereignty on Dera Ismail Khan yet fully accepted. Last but not the least, there were the unruly conditions in Afghanistan itself. Entire politics in that country was on the shifting sands, and this was no less a source of anxiety to him. Ranjit Singh's idea behind his help to Shah was to put his own man on the Afghan throne, which would enable him to consolidate his own position and secure stability in the neighbouring districts.

Refused

But the prince Shah had already lost his confidence in the Maharaja and he refused to avail of this help. Moreover the sanction of the British to any such alliance between Shah and the Maharaja was necessary, lest the former lost their protecting hand, and the British showed no inclination to recognise this alliance.

In 1829, however, the condition in Afghanistan changed. As already discussed, in that year a serious trouble was created on the Maharaja's North-West Frontiers, when Syed Ahmed organised a jihad for the recovery of the old Afghan possessions in the Punjab. Shah Shuja seems already to have been repentant over having missed the previous offers of the Maharaja to help put him on the Afghan throne. This time, therefore, Shah himself approached the Maharaja for help, to which Ranjit Singh gave a favourable response. But the British warning against it. Let the matter drop once again.

Shah's
request
1829

Ranjit
agreed

British
warning

A similar attempt by Shah was made in 1830. But this time the negotiations failed at a preliminary stage, because, it is said, Ranjit Singh forwarded very strict and dictatorial conditions for his help. According to some writers however, he was simply amusing with the idea, for he had no more a faith in the stability of the Shah's mind.

Again in
1830

By 1832, the circumstances changed yet more. Abbas Mirza, ruler of Persia, was trying to extend his power towards Afghanistan, with the active help of Russia. The Afghan rulers were too weak to face such a formidable foe; and Shah was sure that in such a situation if he could collect enough power to fight against the enemies of Afghanistan, the Afghans would welcome him back as their ruler. Amirs of Sind, who had already been under the nominal sovereignty of Afghanistan, also offered to help Shah on some conditions. And a similar offer was made to the Shah by some Afghan nobles as well¹.

Circum-
stances
changed

Under Such favourable circumstances, Shah approached Ranjit Singh immediately for help. But this time, instead of entertaining negotiations with the Shah

Shah's
approach

1. Further, see Masson, 'The Narrative of Various Journeys', Vol. III, p. 87.

first, the Maharaja approached the British if they along with him would be responsible for the movement of Shah's forces. The Maharaja considered such an approach to the English necessary, because this time, the greater powers of Russia and Persia were involved in the matter. The British, however refused once again, to take any interest in the matter.

But this time, the Maharaja did not withdraw himself immediately after the British refusal to take interest. He offered to give a pecuniary aid to the Shah on the condition that after his success, he would divide Sind with the Sikhs. But the Shah refused because, he argued, the Amirs were no more a dependency of the Afghans, nor did their offer to help Shah for the Afghan throne make them so. The negotiations fell through.

British help

Shah Shuja, however, continued his efforts, and at last prevailed upon the English for an advance of Rs. 16,000. He raised an army of invasion and approached Ranjit Singh once again for pecuniary aid. The Maharaja agreed this time on the condition that the Shah would relinquish his claims on all the Afghan territories, which the Sikhs had conquered to the North of Indus. A treaty was signed on 12th March 1833, which later formed the basis for the Tripartite Treaty.

Marched on Afghanistan,

but failed

The Shah proceeded this time with vigour. His exploits in Sind gave him an encouragement, but when he faced the forces of Dost Mohamad, writes Wade, he "yielded his antagonist a victory without suffering defeat." He fled from the battle-field, and later on returned to Sind, where the Amirs bore his expenses back to Ludhiana. Such a result was surprising to all, but more so to Ranjit Singh, who had some ambitions to be realised on this front.

The Tripartite Treaty.

By 1836, however, there was a revolutionary change in the situation. Russia and Persia were trying vigorously to expand towards Afghanistan. The English sent Burnes to Kabul, to approach Dost Mohamad for a Treaty alliance. But the latter demanded that the English get him Peshawar from Ranjit Singh as a price for it. Burnes refused to agree to this term. But in the midst of negotiations, he was startled when a Russian envoy reached the Afghan court, with a letter from count Simonich, the Russian ambassador at Tehran, reading as he learnt, "Trust him with your secrets," and "I request you will look upon him as myself, and take his words as if from me¹.

Changed situation

Burnes reported the matter to the British authorities, who in 1838, brought forth a proposal of Tripartite Treaty among Ranjit Singh, Shah Shuja and the English against their common enemy, Dost Mohamad. The terms of the Treaty were that: (1) Shah Shuja and his successors would never claim in future any territory on either bank of the river Indus and Ranjit Singh's claims on Peshawar would be recognised. (2) None of the three would give shelter to the absconders from other's territory. (3) Ranjit Singh would be permitted a supply of water from the Khyber streams for his fort of Fatehgarh (4) The Maharaja would have a full control over the Sutlej, as far as his territories on it stretched. (5) Shah Shuja would recognise all the agreements already arrived at between English and the Sikhs on Sind. (6) All the three would address one another on the basis of equality (7) Afghan merchants would trade with Lahore and Amritsar and Ranjit Singh would extend them a full protection, and also permit the export of the articles

British proposal

Terms

1. See Latif, ii, p. 486

such as shawls and rice, from his country. (8) Wherever the soldiers of the two countries meet, they would abstain from kine—slaughter. (9) Both Afghanistan and the Punjab, would have a frequent exchange of missions. (10) Both the two would give a mutual help to each other in case of internal risings and external dangers. (11) Enemies of one would be considered enemies of the others. (12) Ranjit Singh would supply 500 soldiers for the restoration of Shah Shuja on the Kabul throne, and would get in return a price of Rs. two lakhs. (13) None of the three would have an ascendancy rights on Sind. (14) Shah Shuja would not have relations with any country without the permission of the British and the Sikhs.

No British
soldiers

It was contemplated that the British would not send their soldiers for Shah Shuja's help. They would rather give him a pecuniary aid to raise soldiers and prepare an army. British officers, of course, would be supplied to direct the Shah's army. Also that Ranjit Singh would march his forces separately and according to his own plan. In other words, as according to Dr. R. R. Sehi, the British "stipulated nothing more in the Treaty than money for the Shah, British officers for his army and agents for accompanying the expedition."

Acceptable
to Ranjit

These conditions could be quite acceptable to the Maharaja, but later on when the things became clearer that his claims on Shikarpur would not be allowed and Sind would remain independent of all the three powers, and that Jalalabad would also not be permitted to be occupied by him as he wanted and yet later, when the British also decided to send their forces to be stationed alongside the Indus, for an emergency, Ranjit Singh smell a rat in the scheme and refused to sign the Treaty. But the British, writes Cunningham, threatened to go it alone, and the Maharaja at the end had to give way.

Later
refused

British
threat

The Treaty was signed in 1838, under which, although Ranjit Singh's claims on the Afghan territories occupied by him were confirmed, and the trade relations between Afghanistan and the Sikhs were to be established for their mutual benefit, yet the Maharaja was not satisfied. His ambition was to re-instate the Shah through the Sikh help alone, and thus get from him in return what he wanted in Sind and elsewhere. But here too, as everywhere else, he was outdone by the British.

We may condemn the Maharaja once again for his failure to assert himself against the British. But if we examine the facts closely, we do come across the justifications for his policy.

The Maharaja in 1838, in fact as before, "had no choice if he wanted to play for safety but to accept the terms of the English."¹ We know that Dost Mohamad had been anxious to secure the British friendship on any term, only if they could have promised him the restoration of Peshawar. If the Maharaja, at this time, had broken with the British, the latter should definitely have dropped the cause of Shah Shuja, and accepting Dost's terms, they should have got their interests served through him.

Moreover, Ranjit Singh was not in good health at this time. He was too old now and he perhaps was aware that there was less possibility of his surviving a clash with the British.

Then, if there was a war with the English, it could not have been won completely except with a concentrated effort of all the states in India. But foresight and "insight were conspicuous for their absence in Indian states and Ranjit Singh's love for fight would have ended disastrously."²

Another diplomatic defeat

Justifications

British and Dost

Bad health

Indian States

1. Ranjit Singh, Cent. Vol., Cawnpore, p. 187.

2. Mohan Lal Vidyarthi, *Ibid.*, p. 188.

Feudalism

And again, "India was then passing through a stage of political, cultural and economic decay and disintegration. The middle ages had ended and the modern age was knocking at the doors of India. Time-spirit was against feudal survival. The English in India were representative of the industrial capitalism of the newly awakened West and the feudalism in India could survive only in alliance with them. It had no future, but it could retain the past only by butterressing the position of the English in India."

Sea at English disposal

"Thus Ranjit Singh was wise in his policy with the English. The English had always the sea at their disposal for securing the sinews of war, and Ranjit Singh would not have been in a position to permanently take advantage of the awkward moments of the English in the first Afghan war.³"

Gulf between

There existed no possibility of joint action, not only between state and a state in India, but also between Indian feudalism and the common people. Between the latter two, there existed a wide gulf, and in case of a major clash with the British, the common man was bound to be stabbed at the back by the feudal lord.

Feudalism and common people.

Merchants

And then, a new class of merchants and industrialists was just in the making in India, thanks to the British. They had a less love for their national independence and more for their good future.

European politics.

A victory against the British could have been possible if the British position in European politics was taken an advantage of. But none in India, including Ranjit Singh seemed to be so capable of those high contacts and wide strategic planning.

Ranjit's death

"Finally his death in 1839 is a valid argument for the position he took."

3. Cent. Vol., Cawnpore p. 188.

Yet there is no doubt that as time passed, Ranjit Singh was definitely getting more confident of his strength against the British. The British were determined to send their forces to Afghanistan through Punjab. But the Governor-General was perplexed when Ranjit Singh sent his soldiers to check violently if the British forces tried to enter the land of the Five Rivers.

There might be some truth in the words of M'Gregor, "Had Ranjit Singh lived to see Shah's success in his ambition, he would have hardly enjoyed it. Had he lived to see final British disaster, he would have possibly exploited it in his own favour."

Yet, getting bold

British disaster.

The Civil Administration
of Ranjit Singh.

Ranjit Singh, not an Autocrat.

Osborne's views,

"Brought up, but not educated, in the idleness and debauchery of a zenana, by the previous influence of which it is marvellous that the stoutest mind should not be emasculated, and the acutest faculties not be irretrievably blunted, he," thus wrote Osborne of the Maharaja, "appears from the moment he assumed the reins of government to have evinced a vigour of understanding on which his habitual excesses, prematurely fatal as they proved to his bodily powers, produced no sensible effect."¹

Three estates

Ranjit Singh was an independent sovereign ruler, thus writes Steinback, who appointed officers according to his own desire, struck coins, was the fountain-head of justice, realised revenues as he liked and declared war and established peace according to his own whims. According to some writers, Ranjit Singh was an autocrat, and all of the three modern estates—Executive, Judiciary and Legislature—were concentrated in him.

No autocrat

But this seems to be too violent an estimate of his character. That he by nature was ill disposed towards autocracy, is proved beyond doubt, when we study his habits and activities more closely and intimately. Tradition says that once when some Pujaris visited his court, overjoyed with their presence, he stepped down from his

1. Osborne, Court & Camp of Ranjit Singh, p. 15.

seat and wiped their feet with his beard. History has yet to show another such instance, where a monarch so strong and so great, could yet be so small and so humble.

Pujaris

Again, every student of the History of the Panjab knows, how on violating a religious canon, Akali Phula Singh condemned him openly in public, when the Maharaja visited the great sikh temple of Amritsar. It was indeed a scene to be visited, when the Maharaja got up in the midst of his gorgeously attired sirdars and entourage, and offered his naked back to be whipped as a punishment. The hardest hearts melted at the sight, and tears gushed forth the eyes of those who witnessed the scene. Akali Phula Singh was so thoroughly converted that he later on proved to be one of the best soldiers of the Maharaja, who laid down his life for his cause.

Punishment

Some more instances can be quoted in this respect. Ranjit Singh appointed Hari Singh Nalwa as the governor of Kashmir, but when Fakir Aziz ud-din and some other advisers of his objected against it on the score that Nalwa was better a General than a ruler, he was not adamant like Muhammad Tughlak and recalled his decision.¹

Nalwa
Kashmir
Governor

Ranjit Singh ruled in the name of 'Sarkar-i-Khalsa', never using his own name, nor appropriating to himself any high sounding titles, as it was the wont of the day. On his coins he inscribed 'Nanak Sahai' or 'Gobind Sahai', not 'Ranjit Sahai', and the state seal bore the inscription 'Sri Akal Sahai' or 'God our help'. Ranjit Singh, indeed, was very scrupulous in attributing, thus writes Cunningham, "every success to the favour of God, and he styled himself and people collectively the 'Khalsa' or Common wealth of Govind. Whether in walking barefooted to make his obeisance to a collateral representative of his prophets, or in rewarding a soldier distinguished by a long and ample beard, or in restraining the excesses of

Sarkar-i-
Khalsa

Coins state
seal

1. See Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Kanpur Cent. Vol. of Ranjit Singh.

the fanatical Akalis, or in beating an army and acquiring a province, he always made it appear that every thing was done for the sake of the Guru, for the advantage of Khalsa, and in the name of Lord¹."

A drum

Ranjit Nagara was the name of Guru Gobind Singh's drum and the one-eyed monarch, Ranjit, never considered himself to be better than a drum of Guru. "He", we may quote Payne in this connection, "assumed few of the outward signs of royalty. His dress was invariably of the simplest description, his only ornaments, even on State occasions being a string of pearls about his waist and the Koh-i-Nur on his wrist. He never wore a royal head-dress, and he never used a throne. 'My sword' he remarked to Baron Hugel, 'is all the distinction I require.' And yet no stranger could have entered his durbar and mistaken any other person for the Lion of the Punjab. But though he affected simplicity himself, his court was renowned even in India, the home of pageantry, for its splendour².' His simplicity in dress was indeed a distinction with the help of which wrote Osborne, any body could recognise the Maharaja in the midst of his gorgeously attired Sirdars.

The
Restrictions.

Thus according to his personal disposition, it was not Ranjit Singh's habit to be an autocrat. But even if he liked to be one, it is difficult to imagine that he could be a success in his venture. The elements of the commonwealth of brotherhood, which had so thoroughly been diffused into the religious philosophy of the Sikhs by Guru Gobind Singh, and under which the authority of the Panj Piyaras, or the Five Beloved, was supposed to be greater than even that of the Guru himself, were too strong among Sikhs yet to permit of any autocrats or

The
Common-
Wealth

1. Cunningham, 'History of the Sikhs'.

2. Payne "A Short History of the Punjab", p. 117.

dictators. Nor, despite efforts throughout his life, was the Maharaja able to discipline free-booters among the Akalis. Akalis were the armed guardians of Amritsar and acted as censor of private morals. They had a contempt for Europeans and attacked even Metcalf's escort, when this British Officer was discussing friendly relations with the Maharaja. According to Burnes, the Maharaja had to appoint special detachments, lest the Akalis crossed the Sutlej, after the Treaty of Amritsar.

The Akalis

Again, although he had weakened all big sardars, and his yearly review of their forces at Dusehra was like taking from them an oath of fealty, yet their ambitions and their spirit of independence had not yet been crushed. Had Ranjit Singh been autocrat, on the intervention of his brother Dhian Singh, Gulab Singh should not have been forgiven for his repeated efforts to act up a new state for himself.

The sardars

Nor would the Sikh soldiers ever be expected to tolerate an autocracy. They had conquered the great States like those of Kashmir and Multan, not for the personal ambitions of the Maharaja, but for the national cause at their heart, which was to establish a unified empire of the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh. One of the causes of Ranjit Singh's conquests and annexations, had always been his effort to satisfy their ambitions and to keep them busy, lest they fell upon the Maharaja himself. That these soldiers were not entirely mercenaries, is proved beyond doubt by the fact that they were never paid their salaries regularly, yet they chose to lay down their lives in the battle-fields, and that too with great inspiration and conviction. It was not unoften that the Maharaja "decided the despatch of military expeditions by casting lots before the Adi Granth". And once this was done, fighting "at the Maharaja's bidding meant fighting for the Guru's cause."¹

Sikh
soldiers

1. See Balwant Singh 'The Army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh', p. 53

Sikh masses

And lastly, the Sikh masses, whether young or old, were soliders to a man. They had never been disarmed by the Maharaja. The Khalsa of the great Guru Gobind Singh, had inherited a tradition of democracy from the founder of their faith. The tradition that how Guru Gobind Singh himself had to bow before the order of the "Panch" at Chamkaur, had not yet been forgotten. Autocrats ill-thrive in such midsts.

Yet strong.

Yet, however, Ranjit Singh was a strong monarch. Whatever he said, was the law of the nation. And that was so because he believed in the famous dictum of Gandhi ; Here go the people, I must follow them, because I am their leader."

King a pivot

B—The Central Government.

His ministers

Pivot of all administration was the king, who consulted whom-so-ever he liked, and did as he would. The king was assisted in his administration by five ministers, of whom the authority of the Chief Minister was the highest. Office of the Chief Minister was occupied by persons such as Raja Dhian Singh, in whom the Maharaja had the fullest confidence. Next important office was that of the Foreign Minister, which was occupied by Faqir Aziz-ud-din, who also advised the Maharaja on his private affairs. The Maharaja had his Defence Minister, who could also be called Commander-in-Chief. This office was held by persons such as Dewan Muhkam Chand, Misr Dewan Chand and Hari Singh Nalwa. Next office was that of the Finance Minister, which was held by persons such as Bhiwani Dass and Dina Nath. The office of Sardar-deori or that of the Minister of the royal household was also important. Raja Dhian Singh occupied this office for sometime before becoming the Chief Minister.

The central Departments

Number of the Central Departments was 12, the more important of them being :—

(1) Daftar-i-Abwab ul-Mal, which kept the account of Land revenue, other taxes and sources of income.

2. Daftar-i-Tozihat, which kept account of the expenses on the royal household, and kept record of the royal harem.

3. Daftar-i-Mawajab, which kept the account of salaries of the army personnels, civil servants and clerks.

4. Daftar-i-Roznamcha Kharch, which kept account of the daily expenses of the Maharaja. The important of the Dewans who held this office, were Bhawani Das, Ganga Ram and Dina Nath.

Despite the Maharaja's efforts to keep the administration efficient, there was sometimes an utter corruption in its ranks. Huge embezzlements of money were done. Hari Singh Nalwa, for instance, pocketed as much as 80 lakh rupees, by reporting constant raids on the Frontiers. Dewan Sawan Mal of Multan, is said to have embezzled as much as 90 lakh rupees during the course of his 20 years in the office. Things improved to certain extent only late in the Maharaja's life.

C—The Local Government.

The country was divided into four provinces as the province of Lahore, of Kashmir or Janat-i-Nazir, of Multan or Dar-ul-Aman, and of Peshawar. In addition, there were some hill principalities paying tribute direct to the Maharaja. And also some Sirdars or Nawabs who having been dispossessed of their own states, were granted liberal jagirs, over which they exercised autocratic rights.

Provinces,
Principalities
and Jagirs

The Province or the Suba was further divided into Parganas, each Pargana being divided into Taluqas and every Taluqa into 50 to 100 Mauzas. Following the Mughal tradition, the principle over which this division of the country was based was the administrative convenience, tribal affinity of the inhabitants, or the facility for the collection of revenues.

Province
further
divided

Nazim

In a Suba, the highest authority was that of Nazim. This office was given only to those persons in whom the Maharaja had full trust. Next to Nazim, and at the head of every division of the Suba, was Kardar. The office of the Kardar, in fact, was more important than that of the Nazim. The latter was more of an appellate character than otherwise, where as a Kardar was directly concerned with administration. The powers and duties of a Kardar were wide. He was a Revenue Collector, as well as a Supervisor of land settlement. He was a Treasurer as well as an Accountant. He was a Judge as well as a Magistrate. He was Excise Supervisor, as well as a Custom Officer. He according to Dr. G. L. Chopra, had the duties of general supervision of the people. It was not very often that appeals were made over and above him to Nazim. Generally and in practice, he was considered to be a final authority over every subject within his area of administration.

The administration of Lahore and of Multan, was more efficient than that of Kashmir and Peshawar, and Ranjit is said to have reprimanded the governors of the latter two provinces, not unoften.

Divided into districts.

According to some writers, however, the country was not divided into provinces. It was rather divided only into districts, some of which were governed directly by the centre, says Dr. N. K. Sinha¹. Three types of persons, carried on the administration of these districts. Firstly the Kardars, who were government agents, and were appointed by the centre with duties and authorities as discussed above. Second were the men of position and influence in their respective areas, like Diwan Sawan Mal of Multan. Their office was hereditary and besides paying the annual tribute or revenue, they seldom reported

¹ Ranjit Singh, pp. 138–139.

their affairs to the centre. And third were the Military chiefs who held feudal demesnes, in return for which they sent contingents in the battle-field. Their power within their territories was unlimited.

The smallest unit of administration was a Mauza, in which panchayats flourished unchecked. "so much sanctity was attached to these Panchayats," writes Dr. Narang. "that no party dared tell lies before them¹". Villages were self-sufficient, land was held jointly on Bhaiyachara principles, and although some say that Kardars squeezed every pie out of their pocket, yet they flourished.

The city of Lahore was ruled independently. It was divided into Mohallas, in each of which, its most influential man was responsible for the maintenance of peace and order. The Chief Police Officer of the city was called Kotwal, having wider powers for the maintenance of law and order. He was generally a Muslim, the most important being Mian Imam Bakhsh. Qazi was a special judicial authority in the city, who decided civil cases of Muslims.

Village
Panchayats

City of
Lahore

D—The Financial Administration.

The financial structure was simple. There was no budget system, and expenses increased or decreased with the increase or decrease in the resources.

Land Revenue.

The land Revenue was the main source of income, so much so that of the total income of a little over Rs. 3 crores, about 2 crores came from this source.

At different stages in his life, Ranjit Singh is said to have introduced different methods of assessment. These methods of assessment varied also according to the circumstances of the people in the different parts of the

Methods of
Assessment

1. Transformation, p. 303.

country. The principle behind all this seems to have been to make the system as much equitable as possible.

Batai

Batai.

In the begining of the period of his administration, for instance, Batai system was introduced in the country. Under this system, the land revenue was assessed on the threshing flour after the harvest was gathered. Claim was made on a portion of the produce in kind. This method which seems to have been borrowed from the Mughals, continued into existence till 1823. The system was dropped in that year due to some of its shortcomings. The main defects in the system were that the assessment being made only after the harvest was over, a large force was required to keep a watch on the cultivators, from the time they sowed their seeds, till the time of harvest, lest some misappropriation of the crop was made by them. Moreover a strict watch had to be kept lest they concealed any portion of the yield.

Its defects

Kankut

Kankut System.

Due to these reasons, the Batai system was replaced by another system, known as the Kankut System, in 1824. Under the new system, the assessment was made on the standing crop, taking its representative field and estimating the yield, out of which a portion was claimed in kind. This system proved to be definitely better than the Batai system, because under it the assessment being made earlier, there was no necessity to supervise the affairs of the cultivators upto the threshing flour. But this system, too, had certain defects, as for instance that despite the best efforts, it could not help make the correct estimate of the yield before hand. Basing calculations only on a representative field, could never ensure that the assessment would be equitable. After 1835, therefore, we learn that the land, sometimes began to be farmed out for 3 to 6 years, to the highest bidder.

Its defects

Cash Payment.

Cash

Towards the end of the reign of Ranjit Singh, Cash Payment system replaced the Kankut System. Under this system, cash payments were realised from the cultivators, in place of the payments in kind. But this system was never enforced strictly. It was wavering and either party could revert to the old system at any time.

Mixed System

Mixed

Sometimes and at some places, this system was worked upon. Under this some crops paid in kind, whereas some crops, such as sugar-cane, cotton and tobacco, on which no correct estimate could be made with regard to their yield, were made to pay only in cash.

Basis of Bigha.

Bigha

At certain places in Punjab, such as in the district Attock¹, this system worked. Under this, estimates were made on a representative bigha, and applied on the rest of the land. After making the estimates, the price of assessment was fixed, which the village money lender was asked to pay in cash, he in return being helped by the Kardar in collecting his dues from the cultivators in kind.

Plough Basis

Plough

At certain places in the country, the assessment was made on the basis of plough. Here instead of drawing estimates on the basis of a representative bigha, it was done rather on the basis of a unit of 15 acres of land, which could be easily cultivated by an average team of bullocks.

Well Basis

Well

On the irrigated lands at certain other places, the assessment was made on the basis of a well. Under

1. See Attock District Gazetteer.

this system a lump sum amount of charge was levied on a unit of land which could be irrigated by an average well, and this then was applied over whole of the irrigated area.

Thus, different types prevailed at different places, as according to the different District Settlement¹ Reports of Punjab, and this was so due to the different conditions of land in the different parts of the country. Generally in major portion of the country, however the Batai system was prevalent in the early years of Ranjit Singh's reign, whereas the cash system existed during his closing years.

The Principles of Assessment

State ownership	The government demand, writes Dr. G. S. Dhillon, was on the "basis of state ownership of land" ² , under which the cultivator could be ejected if he failed to pay his rent rate on the demand, the opinions differ. According to Dr. G. S. Dhillon, Dr. G. L. Chopra, Dr. N. K. Sinha and Griffin, however, on the most fertile and favourably situated land, the state demand was as much as 50 per cent of the produce. On the less fertile and less favourably situated land, as according to Lord Lawrence, the demand could be 2/5th, or even 1/3rd or 1/4th of the total produce. Again, in the case of the land held by a Government official, such as Mukaddams, who assisted in revenue collections, the state demand was yet low. Sometimes, again, the whole taluqa was leased to a Kardar, on fixed payment in cash, and the Kardar made his own arrangements with his cultivators on some set principles.
Demand	
Government official	
Leased	

1. Readers who are interested in a detailed study of the System are advised to consult these reports, which are available at the Central Secretariat Library, New Delhi.

2. See Kh. College Amritsar Ranjit Singh Cent. Vol.

On the whole, writes Dr. G. S. Dhillon, the cultivators paid "according to their capacity to pay and Adam Smith's famous canon of Taxtion, i. e., 'equality of Sacrifice, was effectively applied¹."

Collection and Remittance

Collection of the land revenue was made by Mukaddams twice a year, about a month after the harvest. The Mukaddam was helped in his job by chaudhris and he, after collecting the revenue, remitted it to Kardar. The latter deposited it in the government District treasuries, where, after defraying the local expenses, the balance was remitted to the higher authorities. Remittances to Lahore were, according to Shahamat Ali, made in hundis drawn upon the bankers of Amritsar.

Different views have been expressed on the Land Revenue System of the Maharaja, by different writers. Thus it is written in the Jullundur and Kapurthala District Gazetteer, Ranjit Singh "took whatever he could and whenever he could get it." Similar views are expressed by Griffin.² J. M. Douie writes that the rate of assessment was so enacting that "the villagers had to bribe the appraising officers to take less³." Again, writes the author of the Kangra District Gazetteer, that the local officers of Ranjit Singh were invested with too much authority, there was no fixed time for auditing their revenue accounts, and they enjoyed a free hand in exercising their caprice. Condition of the peasants, writes Griffin, was pitiable.

To form a correct estimate of the Land Revenue System of Ranjit Singh, however, writes Prem Singh Hoti⁴, we must remember that the Land Revenue was

Views

Harsh
sy. temLocal
officersLand
Revenue
Manistry

1. Dr. G. S. Dhillon, Op. Cit.

2. Ranjit Singh.

3. See Douie, Punjab Settlement Manual.

4. See his 'Hari Singh Nalwa', p. 99.

His circumstances

Instance of Kashmir

Contradic-tory re port

Poor means of communication

Age of experiments

the mainstay of the whole government machinery under Ranjit Singh. Yet, considered in connection with the circumstances and the age the Maharaja lived in, his system of Land Revenue can not be condemned wholesale. Kashmir for instance, paid a land revenue of Rs. 15, 52, 825 under Akbar, Under the regime of Pathans, the amount paid was Rs. 60,00,000. But under Ranjit Singh, this beautiful valley paid only Rs. 13,00,000.

Nor are the European authorities entirely to be believed in their estimation of the system. Views of the Jullundur District Gazetteers have been expressed above, where it says that Ranjit Singh "took whatever he could and whenever he could get." But views of the writer of the Revised Settlement Report of the same district are different. He writes thus in unequivocal terms that, "Misr Rup Lal's (who was the authority in-charge of the affairs) demand seems to have been usually moderate and equal."

J. M. Douie's view that the officers of the Maharaja were corrupt and that the villagers had to bribe them to take less also need, perhaps, to be sobered. We have already mentioned elsewhere that the great authorities like Hari Singh Nalwa and Dewan Sawan Mal were corrupt and they embezzled money belonging to the State. There is no doubt in the correctness of this statement. But to form a correct view of the things, we have to concede that the Maharaja had certain limitations to work within. There was no well developed system of the means of communication and transportation to strengthen local control on the Government officials. Nor is it to be forgotten that the Maharaja's state was yet an infant state, where for the first time after centuries of confusion and chaos, experiments, as discussed above in the different methods of assessment, were being made to seek out systems best suited to character and the needs of the people. And under such circumstances, if

the Maharaja could not introduce a full-proof land revenue system immediately after the resumption of power, it hardly seems to be a personal weakness of his. Experiments were made, things had yet to mature, and everybody knows that towards the close of his life, his system was much better than it was in the beginning of his reign. Reforms do take time. Nor can it be asserted that the Maharaja did not castigate his officers wherever he found them oblivious of their duties.

Other Sources of Revenue, Customs and Excise

Besides Land Revenue, another source of income was Customs and Excise which brought the Maharaja as much as Rs. 16,00,000 a year. For the purpose of the collection of this revenue, thus writes the Punjab Administration Report of 1849, the whole kingdom was dotted over with an innumerable custom barriers. The custom lines crossed one another irregularly. Duties were imposed on all articles, irrespective of their origin or destination. No clear distinction was made between articles of luxury and of necessity. Nor could any good escape duty. Even the agricultural produce, over which land revenue had already been paid, did not escape these charges. Nor did, according to some writers, an article have to pay these charges only once. While passing from one side of the country to another it would pay these charges as many times as it met the custom lines, so that before reaching its destination, its original price got sometimes doubled and even more. Payne¹ also holds the similar views.

Yet, however, the customs could not have been very oppressive and objectionable. Because, had they been so, thus writes Dr. N. K. Sinha, the merchants could have changed their routes and conveyed "their goods through the territory of a less enacting chief." Commerce

Innumerable
custom lines

Duties on all
articles

More than
once

Not
oppressive

1. Payne, 113.

Commerce flurioshed

Not modern standard

Jagirs

Monoplies

Moharana

Abwabs

Professional taxes

was, as even the bitterest of Ranjit Singh's critics agree in flourishing condition. And again, although Ranjit Singh could not understand the advantages of doing away with internal barriers against trade, considering the standard to which the principles of the contemporary Oriental economics had evolved, and considering more particularly the Maharaja's own circumstances, we can not condemn him too much for the weakness. The sikh people of the time as according to Dr. H. R. Gupta, are to be judged not by a modern standard but by a standard of their own time.

The jagirs, which were granted for meritorious services and for gallantry in army, were another source of income. They brought, according to Shahmat Ali, an annual revenue of Rs. 87, 54, 590. Princep, however, estimated this revenue at Rs. 1, 09, 28, 000.

Monopolies of all kinds were subjected to taxation, of which that of the manufacture of salt was important. Of the eight salt mines in the Punjab, only four worked and the annual revenue from their monopolies was about Rs. 8,00,000. The monopolies for the distillation of spirit and for the manufacture of drugs also brought some revenue.

Moharana was an income from judicial institutions. And this, according to Princep, brought the Maharaja as much as Rs. 5,77,000 a year.

Abwabs were the several small cesses levied by the State and collected along with the Land Revenue. Income from the abwabs varied between 5 and 15 percent of the total amount of the land revenue.

Besides all this, there were other sources of income. All the principal artisans, such as blacksmiths, weavers and tanners paid a professional tax of Re. 1 per house. The inferior workmen such as kamins, had to pay an

amount of Re. 0-8-0. per house per year. "Traders were also taxed from one rupee to two rupees per head¹."

Yet another source of income was the lapsed jagirs. All the jagirs, granted for personal merit and services, remained with the grantee only for his life time. After his death his jagir reversed to the State and his descendants if aspirant of such a privilege had to earn it themselves again. This rule, with a very few exceptions seems to have been applied over all the servants of the State without any distinction or discrimination. So much so that even the descendants of the great personalities, such as Hari Singh Nalwa, who had rendered such great services to the State, could not escape it.

Lapsed
Jagirs

Again sometimes at the time of emergency, employees of the State were asked to forego their salaries for a certain period of time. Thus for instance, in 1825, when the royal resources were unusually exhausted, French general in the service of the Maharaja, and their regiments, had to give up their salaries and pays for two months.

Employees'
salaries

Expenditure

Of the items of expenditure, naturally, in a State which was yet in its territorial infancy, the most important was that of military. The annual expenditure of the Maharaja on his military forces, as according to Shahmat Ali, was as much as Rs. 1, 27, 96, 482. Rest of the income went for expenditure on the civil administration.

Military

The taxation system of the Maharaja, as discussed above, may appear "crude to modern observer." Thus writes Dr. G. S. Dhillon². "But allowing a due concession for the conditions under which it had to be worked out, there is scarcely any justification for such an impression." The biggest disservice that a government can

Review

1. Gujranwala Distt. Gazetteer.
2. ASR Cent. Vol. of Ranjit Singh.

render to its country is that it should collect taxes and spend the money thus collected in a country other than its own. In that case, there will soon be dearth of money in circulation, which will bring deflation and the ruin to the producer, which is always inherent in it. But in this, the character of Ranjit Singh's Government was above board. Under him, thus writes Dr. N. K. Sinha, money merely changed hands, what he collected with one hand, he gave away to the people with the other. No costly luxuries were imported from abroad and so much so that the foreign servants such as the French, too, were more or less nationalised. They were to marry Punjabi wives and settle in this country. What was, thus, paid to them, was spent within the Maharaja's country itself.

E—Judicial Administration

Not written

There was no written constitution or written law under Ranjit Singh, writes Steinbach. Customs and Usages were generally the basis of justice, and religion was the main source of inspiration behind this all. Some times whim of the judge had its play, but it was rare, as it was possible for every body to make an appeal to the higher authorities. Racial prejudices were given due consideration while deciding disputes. And the fact, that secular spirit prevailed over all parts of the Maharaja's administrative machinery, is further proved, when we learn that, despite the so badly blood-stained history of the Sikh-Muslim relations, the latter were given due regard for their religious beliefs and prejudices.

No racial prejudices

Quazis

For Mahomedans, thus, it was the Quazis who ordained marriage ceremonies. They also decided Muslim religious cases, declared the recorded facts and expounded local law.

Meerly
changed
hands

Within
state

Justice in the time of Ranjit Singh; as it was in the time of the Sikh Misls, was more local than national. It was besides, essentially, a source of income to the State, so much so that, it is said, whenever the Maharaja got a chance to realise money through it, he never missed it, though, while administering justice, he never forgot to be honest.

King was the fountain-head of justice. Being the highest judicial authority in the State, he heard appeals above the courts of Nazims and Kardars, and sometimes, we learn, when he felt that justice was not being done in a particular case, he interventoed of his own, even without a formal appeal having been made to him, and saw that the case was judicially decided. And it is also recorded that so many times he abused the governors from whose provinces he received many appeals.

Next to the King was the Adalat-i-Ala or Central Court, or the High Court. This court was instituted at the head-quarters of the State at Lahore, and it heard appeals above the courts of Nazims and Kardars, before they went to the King himself. Special Adalati Courts were instituted in the cities such as Amritsar and Peshawar, which decided both civil and criminal cases coming from within the respective cities.

At the head of every province there was Nazim's Court. The authority of this court was mainly appellate and it heard appeals from the courts of the Kardars. The Kardar's court was at the head of every district and it heard cases both civil and criminal. In the villages of course, the village Panchayats exercised their judicial authority duly, and they, as discussed above, were given special recognition and respect by the State.

The Maharaja, as discussed above, was in the habit of granting liberal jagirs to those who deserved them. Within these jagirs, whether belonging to Sikh chiefs, Hindus or the Mahomedan Nawabs, the heads of the

Justice local

A source

King fountain-head

Adalat-i-Ala

Special Adalati Courts

Nazim's Court

Kardar's Court

Village Panchayats

Jagirdari Adalats

jagirs were given autocratic civil and criminal authorities in their respective courts, and ordinarily their subjects could not appeal even to the Maharaja.

Punishments

Penal code not strong
Penal code under Ranjit Singh was not very strong. Imprisonment was not often resorted to and capital punishment, writes Eliot, except at places like Peshawar and Hazara, was un-heard of. In the worst cases, some parts of the body of the criminal were ordered to be cut off. But rarely was there a punishment, writes Steinbach, which would not be changed into fine and money-payment.

Executions prompt.
The executions of cases dealt by the Maharaja himself, writes Osborne, "are very prompt and simple, and follow quickly on the sentence. One blow of an axe, and then some boiling oil to immerse the stump in, and stop all effusion of blood, is all the machinery he requires for his courts of justice. He is himself accuser, Judge, and jury; and five minutes is about the duration of the longest trial at Lahore."¹ In one case to which perhaps Osborne himself was a witness, thus, two men were said to have pilfered at the gates of Maharaja's harem. The matter was reported to the Maharaja, who called these men to his presence and ordered for a ear of the one and nose of the other to be cut forthwith.

An instance
Justice a source of income
Justice, as mentioned above, was an essential source of income. There was hardly a crime which could not be paid for with money fine. It is more interesting, however, to note that both the winning and the loosing parties had to pay an amount of money to the judge. The former paid it as Nazrana, because the case had been decided in favour, and the latter paid it as jurmana

1. Osborne, p. 67.

or fine. If a particular case such as that of theft, was brought before a court, and it took an excessive amount of time for the judge to trace the culprit, the party which had been a victim to the crime, had to pay a special amount of money for the waste of judge's time, which was known as Taikhana. Whenever the stolen goods were recovered, the owner paid 1/4th of their value to the judge as Shukrana. Sometimes, whole of the village near which a robbery occurred, was made to pay for the goods robbed and 1/4th of their value was claimed by the State.

Charles Mason, a reputed traveller, happened to pass through Punjab on his way to Afgharistan, and remarking on the Law and Order situation in the country, he remarked, "time was that a Sikh and a robber were synonymous terms, now few thefts are heard of and seldom or never those whole-sale forays to which the chiefs were so much addicted." The assertion that the Sikhs ever acted as robbers, may be disputed¹, but the fact that the Maharaja was able to establish a good standard of Law and Justice after centuries of confusion and chaos, and that too on the basis of complete secularism can hardly be over emphasised.

F—News writers and Diplomats.

An essential requisite for all the great conquerors and good administrators, as Ranjit Singh himself was, is that they should have an intimate knowledge of the Territorial, Social and Economic conditions, not only of the country they rule, but also of the countries which border their own territorial acquisitions. Besides, they should be well informed of the political atmosphere of

Jurmana

Taikhana

Shukrana

Villages responsible

Good standard established

Essential requisite

¹ See Dr. H. R. Gupta 'Later Mughal History of the Sikhs'; I.B. Bannerji, 'Evolution of Khalsa'; N. K. Sinha, 'Rise of the Sikh Power'.

Well informed

the neighbouring lands, and they should know intimately the character, ambitions and whims of their rulers. And in this, Ranjit Singh, indeed, was a past master. The Maharaja, writes Elphinstone, was personally one of the most well-informed monarchs of Asia. His inquisitive nature and his thirst for knowledge, has rather been proverbial, and has been testified by almost all the contemporary European visitors to his court.

News-writers

Like the most efficient of the Mughal monarchs in India of the more recent times, and like Ashoka of the ancient days, Ranjit Singh had his news-writers in every part of the country he ruled, and they supplied him constantly, the information regarding all the important events of the concern of the Maharaja, from their respective parts of the country. At almost all the important places, such as the head-quarters of his provinces, two news-writers were appointed who reported to the Maharaja of the activities of the Nazims and those of the Kardars. They acted as an effective check on the corrupt practices of the high officials and spied against their disloyalty to the Maharaja.

At important places.

Agents in Sind and Afghanistan

Besides, the Maharaja had his agents appointed in Sind and Afghanistan. He was quite intimately informed of the British interests and activities, through his agents at places such as Ludhiana. Fakir Aziz-ud-din, was said to have been the most important of Ranjit Singh's diplomats. He worked as Ranjit Singh's foreign minister and helped him in all his diplomatic transactions. He was intimately informed of the British character and activities and many a time, it was on the basis of his advice that the Maharaja decided his affairs with the English.

Fakir
Aziz-ud-din

G—The General Survey.

While drawing a general estimate of the administrative machinery of the Maharaja, some writers do not seem to have taken a very good view of the things. Different shortcomings in his system have been pointed out by different writers. His system was the one based upon his personal discretion, is the view some writers hold. Ranjit Singh was an autocrat, whose will was the law of the land. Yet, however, his administration was not efficient. There was an abuse of delegated authority, corruption was rife, and many a time, Ranjit Singh's officials exploited the ignorant and illiterate masses of the land to a bad purpose. Ranjit Singh encouraged no fine arts in his land and no effort was ever made to cultivate the essentials of a good civilization on the national basis. Ranjit Singh established no schools for educational purposes, nor did his court have even a single scholar of repute. His treasury, many times, was filled with the help of the standing army. And finally, his personal influence, rather than any efficient governmental set up was the only hold upon the country, which held all people together, with the result that immediately after his death, there being no man of his magnetic personality to hold the things together, there was a complete confusion on the land, and chaos became the order of the day.

Their is no doubt that the administrative machinery of the Maharaja was not very perfect. But the perfection is a quality which only superhumans could possess, and the Maharaja never claimed himself to be any thing more than an ordinary human being, and despite his failings and shortcomings, an ordinary and honest servant of the Khalsa. Moreover, while drawing an estimate of his system, his circumstances and the age he lived in, must be given a due consideration. It will be ill, indeed, of us to judge him with the norms and the standards of the present times. And it is happy that almost all the

Short-
Comings

Personal
discretion

Delegated
authority

Education

Personal
hold

His own
Circum-
stances

critics of his system, with only some rare exceptions, after discussing his shortcomings, have not failed in giving sympathetic considerations to him at the end.

No confusion
of rights

"As things stood," thus writes Temple, "there have been no convulsions, no confusions of rights and properties."¹ And again, writes Lawrence, "As a military despotism the government is a mild one and as a federal union hastily patched up into a monarchy, it is strong and efficient." "In a territory compactly situated," writes Burnes, "he has applied himself to those improvements which spring only from great minds and here we find despotism without its rigour, a despot without cruelty and a system of government far beyond the native institutions of the east, though far from the civilisation of Europe."² Increased wealth of Lahore and Amritsar, thriving manufactures and trade in the country, as testified even by the first Administration Report of the Punjab under the British, prove beyond doubt the Maharaja's love for the people and their prosperity.

Mild Government

No rigour

Lahore and Amritsar

The Merits

No discrimination

While discussing the merits of his administration, the first credit, that the Maharaja would deserve, as Dr. Narang would agree³, is the perfect impartiality with which he chose his officers. He had a very keen eye for merits in a man, and when he selected officers, it was neither religion nor race, and nor it was the birth of a man that counted with him. The humblest citizen under him had the possibility of acquiring the highest position. The persons such as Raja Dhian Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa, had no claim to high births, yet they were among the most favoured servants of the State, and that was because they possessed merits.

1. Jullundur District Settlement Report.

2. Travels, i, p. 285.

3. See Dr. Narang, pp. 296—298; also see Gordon, p. 114.

It is a misinterpretation of the essentials of Sikhism, when the writers like Sir Lepel Griffin say that "the main idea of Sikhism was the destruction of Islam and it was unlawful to salute Mahomedans, to associate with them or to make peace with them on any terms." It was a policy which was followed neither by Guru Gobind Singh, nor by Banda Bahadur, the most determined amongst the Sikh fighters against Mahomedan tyranny. And much less was it followed under Ranjit Singh, when the Sikhs got all the political power in the Punjab and could do against Mahomedans, what they had done against the Sikhs in their own days of glory. In his administration and in the selection of his officers, a perfect policy of toleration and a discerning eye for merit were employed. Jats were better as fighters than as Ministers, and although the Maharaja himself was a Jat, he never appointed a man of his own race as Minister. Sikhs were warriors, and therefore they predominated in the Maharaja's military forces. Hindus were expert financiers, and therefore the persons such as Diwan Bhiwani Das and Moti Ram, were given the duties of financial administration. Muslims were expert in diplomatic and confidential affairs, and therefore a man such as Faqir Aziz-ud-din, was appointed as foreign minister of the State. Imam Bux was head of the city police at Lahore, and Mufti Muhammad Shah was an adviser in mortgages, sales and contracts. Even the man in-charge of an important place such as the fort at Govindgarh in Amritsar, was a Muslim—Imamuddin.

Ranjit Singh's policy of toleration is proverbial indeed, and we learn that it was a custom with him to favour Syads in assessment. He gave state-grants to Ulamas and holy-men, and sometimes, as we learn, he would reward richly a person who could recite the entire Quran from memory.

Mis-inter-
pretationHis
selectionsSyads were
favoured

No Divine
Right
Theory

Another important quality of the Maharaja was the total absence in him of a belief in the Divine Right Theory of Kingship. The Maharaja never appropriated any high sounding titles to himself as it was a wont of the day among persons of his position and status. Throughout his period of reign, he remained a servant of the Khalsa, and so much so that, as discussed above, even the coin of his reign did not bear an inscription of his name. Everything was dedicated to the Almighty Lord above, and to Khalsa below.

Benevolent
despotism

Despite all this, however, the Maharaja, as according to some writers, was a despot, who appointed officers, transferred them and dismissed them according to his free will. But this, despotism, again, was only a benevolent despotism. He wielded strong power, because he carried the faith and confidence of the people along with him, and again because that he never made a wrong use of it anywhere. The instance as to how he offered himself to be flogged at Amritsar, when somehow unwillingly, he transgressed some essential of the Sikh faith, need not be too often quoted.

Economic
resources

And again, it was a merit of Ranjit Singh's administrative system, that the economic resources of the State as explained, were utilised wholly within the State itself. If his system of taxation was exacting, his army and State officials distributed the money back among those to whom it belonged. Money only changed hands, and what the Maharaja took with one hand, he gave it away with the other.

within
State

If the Maharaja failed in establishing some perfect legal system in the modern sense of the term, his merit was that he created an imperfect legal system, yet suitable as according to the age and circumstances he lived in, where only confusion and chaos ruled supreme.

Legal
system

The Maharaja kept no police to chastise the people, no Arms Acts were imposed, and the people held and manufactured arms freely and could use them against the State at any time they were dissatisfied with it. Yet there is a record that not a single responsible officer tried to be disloyal to him so long as he lived.

No police to
chastise

The people had a full freedom from any sort of official interference in their private life. It was only in connection with Land Revenue and other such taxes that the interference was made, but that too by a limited number of officials. His government, thus writes Payne¹, "though undoubtedly oppressive was not altogether unpopular. Whatever its faults, it was a settled government, and that alone was an unwonted luxury in the Punjab."

No Inter-
ferenceA settled
government

Another quality of his administration was that it insisted upon no technicalities of procedure. Red-tapism, which is a curse of the modern democratic systems, hardly existed. Decisions taken were prompt and the authorities were delegated to make the administration localised. The flourishing condition of the Panchayats in the villages, was indeed a sign of high democratic freedom which the people enjoyed.

No techni-
calitiesPanchayats
flourished

The Maharaja's liberal policy of granting jagirs to the deserving hands, is a fact too often quoted by his admirers and says Sunder Singh Majithia², "even upto the present time the jagirs granted to religious institutions irrespective of castes and creeds show the broad mindedness of the old chief."

Liberal
grant of
jagirs

1. Payne, p. 114

2. See Ranjit Singh's Cent. Vol., Cawnpur.

Education encouraged

And then, it is wrong to say that the Maharaja paid no heed towards the development of the arts of peace within his state. It is wrong again to say that no encouragement was given to the development of education among the people. Hindu Dharamshalas and Pathshalas, and the Muslim mosques and Maktabs, were indeed, given liberal endowments, as testified by his contemporaries. And as according to Lethbridge, the Director of Public Instructions in Punjab under the British Government, proportionately there were more literates in the Punjab under the Maharaja than under the British. And Dr. Leitner in his History of Indegenous Education in Punjab, bewails, that the Education of women which was so much popular in Punjab before its annexation by the English, had considerably declined due to a defective British approach to the subject.

Means of Communication

And again, if there was some abuse of the delegated authority under Ranjit Singh, let us not forget that the means of communication in the country were yet primitive. That the Maharaja himself left no effort unmade to see the efficiency and honesty introduced in his system, can hardly need be emphasised. While moving out, thus writes Sunder Singh Majithia, he did so, often without his guards and *incognito*, and mixed freely with the peasants to know their difficulties and to plan their welfare. And that is why the people loved him so much, whether Hindu, Sikh or Muslims, and when he died they said, "The Punjab had become a widow."

Mixed freely

And at the end, even if there were some defects in his administrative machinery, let us admire him, that in the midst of his career of conquests, and at a place where there was nothing but confusion, he was able to create a consolidated administrative machinery at all. His greatest service to the State, writes Gordon was "that he left

Consolidated administration

his successors a united kingdom, a territory larger than the present Italy^{1.}" And the creation of a consolidated central administration over such a big State, under such bad circumstances was itself an achievement to be envied.

1. Gordon, p. 118.

and will sustain a soldier's heart in the field of battle and a lion's heart in the camp. "The man who does not give a determined account of his conduct is not fit to be a soldier." He is a soldier who has

CHAPTER XI

The Military Administration.

'A Sikh means a soldier', wrote Ibbetson defining the Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh, and in 1911, when Griffin was called upon to define what this soldier was, he wrote "Hardy, brave, and of intelligence too slow to understand when he is beaten, obedient to discipline, devotedly attached to his officers, and careless of the caste prohibitions which render so many Hindu troops difficult to control and to feed on active service, he is unsurpassed as a soldier in the East."

A—The Tradition.

History of this great soldier starts with that of Guru Nanak, but to start with he was only a saint. It was the tragic end of the 5th Guru, which shook him from his saintly meditations. The sixth Guru gave him a military discipline; thus converting him into a great saint-soldier. A tradition of self-sacrifice was given him by the 9th Guru who for the cause of the nation, laid down his life at Delhi. The baptism of the 10th Guru fired the Sikh with a "burning and consuming passion for political freedom," and he was now converted from Sikh into Singh, or a lion. The sacrifice of the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh, taught him further as to how he should sacrifice his home and hearth for a cause. The exploits of Banda Bahadur in the Punjab, strengthened his taste for victories against a big power like that of the Imperial Mughals. He learnt technique of the Guerilla war-fare from Abdali's attempts to suppress him and thus by the time Ranjit Singh acceded his throne, his tradition as 'an invincible warrior, who could sacrifice his all for a cause,' was fully established.

Yet, however, the Sikhs had not learnt the discipline of an organised army. The chaos that ensued after the death of Banda Bahadur, had converted them into a turbulent and independent individuals "who had been accustomed to carry their swords from one leader to another as they saw the best chance of plunder, and who changed their masters as often as it suited their inclination or convenience."¹ It rested only with Ranjit Singh, who proved his military genius by converting this confused mass of invincible warriors, with rich tradition of sacrifice and victories, into a powerful, disciplined and well equipped army under an efficiently organised leadership. For, the Maharaja's dealings with the English had made it "abundantly clear that if the Sikh State was to subsist at all, it would have to be strengthened both militarily and politically."²

A confused mass

Disciplined army

The Reorganisation under Ranjit Singh.

The Maharaja's army, as reorganised by him, consisted of three different sections, i.e. Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery, which may be discussed as follows.

B—The Infantry.

At the beginning, the infantry soldier was considered inferior to cavalry, and was, says Griffin, in time of war left behind to garrison forts, or to look after the women³. But under the influence of European officers, Ranjit Singh realised that infantry was more important than cavalry, and it was not long before that, by good pay and personal attention, and under General Ventura's introduction of alert obedience, long enduring fatigue and other qualities, the infantry became the most efficient standing army of Ranjit Singh.

European influence

1. Griffin, p. 132.

2. Khushwant Singh, p. 61.

3. Griffin, p. 133.

Voluntary recruitment

Recruitment into the Maharaja's infantry forces, was entirely voluntary, but the service being attractive for the emoluments and adventures that it offered, people joined it willingly. The regular drilling system that was introduced by the Maharaja, after the European manner however, was not liked by the soldiers in the beginning who termed it contemptuously as 'Ruqs Looluan,' or 'ballet steps'! Later on, however, as it became a regular part of the training system, the soldiers gave in.

Drill

In its organisation, the Infantry consisted of battalions, as administrative units. The battalion consisted of 900 strong, and was commanded by a Commandant. The Commandant was assisted by an Adjutant and a Major. The battalion was divided into 8 companies of about 100 each, and a company was further divided into 4 sections each of which consisted of 25 men, who were commanded by an officer known as a Havildar. The Havildar was assisted by a Naik.

Composition

Battalion

Companies Sections

Company officers

A part

Regimental officers

Monthly Salaries

Besides Havildar and Naik at the lowest grade, the other important officers of the company from the highest downward were, Subedar, Jamadar and Sarjan (Sergeant). Phuriya, Bugler and a Trumper complete the list.

The battalion was a part of regiment, of which clerks kept account. Men lived in barracks and each Regiment carried with it a copy of Guru Granth. The important regimental officers were, commandant, Adjutant, Major, Writer, Accountant, and a Granthi. Besides, it had its camp followers such as, camel drivers smiths, *baildars* and cooks.

It was for the first time that the system of regular monthly salaries was introduced by Ranjit Singh. Prior to him, the Sikh soldiers had always depended upon loot and plunder of their enemy. But this they got only when the forces marched for battles and expeditions. Otherwise, each soldier was supposed to have his own individual

source of regular income for livelihood. Under Ranjit Singh, however, the system changed. The monthly salary of a General was from Rs. 400/- to Rs. 460/-. A commandant got from Rs. 60/- to Rs. 150/- and a sepoy from Rs. 7 to Rs. 8½.

The Infantry soldiers marched to the beat of drum. Their word of command, as introduced by the French officer Vantura was in French. Their movement was swift and well organised and besides the regular parades that they had, a general parade of the entire army was held annually on Dussehra in Lahore or Amritsar, which was inspected by Ranjit Singh. Their flag was of Saffron colour and their war cry 'Sat Sri Akal !' "Their endurance was very great, and a whole regiment would march 30 miles a day for many days together," thus wrote Griffin¹.

Commands
in French

Movement

Flag

Endurance

Iron legs

Again, commenting upon their courage and fortitude, wrote Burton, a traveller who visited Punjab in 1836. They are "thin men with good features: they are capable of bearing the fatigue of long marches for several days in succession, so that it has become a by-word that the Punjabis have iron legs. On their marches, they encamp very regularly, and I saw 30,000 men, the army of Peshawar which moved with as much facility as a single regiment on this side (the British) of the Sutlej. No wheeled carriage is allowed, and their own bazars contain all they require²".

Similar words of appreciation were used by Osborne, who visited Punjab in 1839. Tall, "rather slight, but very manly looking men, with great length of limb, and broad open chests.. They are hardly far beyond the generality of natives, and seem a merry, light-hearted race of people³" Captain Wade "could not help remarking the cheerful alacrity with which the Sikhs seemed to

Foreign
observer's
comments

1. Griffin, p. 134.

2. 'First and Second Sikh Wars,' p. 11.

3. 'The Camp and Court of Ranjit Singh,' pp. 102—104.

endure the fatigue.¹" And Baron Van Hugel was rather "surprised to find his (Ranjit Singh's) troops so proficient in European tactics.²"

Yet, however, there were shortcomings in this part of the Maharaja's army. "On parade," thus wrote Burton, "they give utterances to abusive expressions, striking freely any of a rank inferior to their own. The commandant canes the adjutant, who in turn strikes the officers at the heads of 'companies' who again vent their ill humour on the non-commissioned and privates.³"

The short-
comings

Abusive
expressions

A band of
music

strength

Three
classes

Allard

Strength

The drum and fife and bugle were in general use in the Sikh infantry regiments, "and in some of the favourite royal corps of Ranjit Singh an attempt was made to introduce band of music," writes Steinbach, "but a graft of European melody upon Punjanbee discord did not produce, as may be imagined, a very harmonious result."

The total strength of the Maharaja's Infantry in 1811, was 4,061, but in 1845, six years after his death, it was found to be 70,721. It is not clear whether the whole of this increase took place during his life time or after.

C—The Cavalry.

The cavalry of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was divided into three classes, which were as follows.

(1) *Regular Cavalry.* It was a body of picked men and horses. Fine in appearance, equipment and discipline, this body got a regular training after the European manner. It was kept under a French General named Jean Francois Allard, who had been engaged by the Maharaja in 1822. Its strength in 1831 was 1,209. In 1838, it numbered 4090; but by 1845 it increased to 6,235.

1. See Dr. Chopra, 'The Punjab as a Sovereign State,' pp. 301—327

2. 'Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab,' p. 289.

3. 'The First and Second Sikh Wars,' p. 11.

2. *Ghor Charah.* This was another class of Ranjit Singh's cavalry, which unlike the Regular cavalry, got no regular training. Nor was it disciplined in any military code. It was organised on the model of the Khalsa army of the Misls, which believed rather in dash and reckless courage than in any regular procedure of offence or defence. It was paid directly by the State. The payment in the beginning was made in jagirs to the value of Rs. 300 to Rs. 400 per trooper a year. Later on, however, cash payments became regular, which varied between Rs. 250 and Rs. 300 a year. A fresh recruit, who entered into this service, had to make his own arrangement for a horse, but in the case of his being unable to do so, he was provided with necessary equipment by the State, against a deduction from his salary in easy instalments.

Mis.'s model

Payments

Horses

Infantry and
Cavalry
compared

Griffin, while comparing the Maharaja's Infantry with his Cavalry, writes at one place: "In the Maharaja's army the infantry were the pick of the youths of the country; only the handsomest and strongest were selected, while the cavalry were irregular troops, the contingents of his different Sirdars, and not appointed for any consideration of bravery or strength. The horses were small, weak and ill-bred, and the accoutrements were of the roughest and coarsest kind¹." But this assertion of Griffin that the horses of the Maharaja's cavalry were "small, weak and ill-bred," does not seem to be born out by the other sources of our information. Leaving aside the regular cavalry even in the Ghorcharah cavalry we learn the lean and thin horses were not tolerated. Some sort of regular inspection of these horses was made, and sometimes, we learn, when a horse was found to be lean, a deduction was made from the salary of its owner, as a mode of punishment for his negligence.

1. Griffin, p. 134.

"By their desperate courage the Ghorcharahs, thus wrote Moorecroft about them, "had earned for themselves a name and for Ranjit Singh a kingdom¹".

Further divided
The Ghorcharha cavalry, we learn, was further divided into two classes. (1) The Ghorcharhas Khas. It comprised of one regiment, the troopers for which were recruited from among those of the nobility of the province. (2) Misaldar Sawars. They belonged originally to independent chieftains of the Punjab, on whose overthrow, they transferred their services to the Maharaja.

By Jagirdars

(3) *Jagirdari Cavalry*. These were the number of troopers maintained by jagirdars, who according to the terms of their respective agreements with the Maharaja were, when required, bound to furnish him with efficient and well-equipped troopers. These jagirdars presented their troopers for the Maharaja's review in the general parade on every Dusehra.

Review
Strict rules against corruption

The Maharaja made some strict rules against corruption in the Jagirdari Cavalry. Every Jagirdar was bound to deposit a regular descriptive roll regarding his contingent in the State Record Office, on the good condition of which depended the renewal of his jagir. Even a person like Hari Singh Nalwa could not escape punishment in case of his negligence in the matter, and he, according to Sohan Lal, was fined Rs. 2 lakhs, for keeping less than the stipulated number of troopers.

(4) *Akalis* were some irregular regiments of the Maharaja, employed on "any dangerous, or desperate service²". With naked swords, two in hands and two in belts, with a match-lock at their back and two pairs

1. Travels, i, p. 98.

2. Osborne, 'Camp and Court of Ranjit Singh', p. 143.

of quoits round their turbans, they dashed about unafraid¹. With Akali Phula Singh as their leader, they were two to three thousands in number. They hated Europeans and Pathans and Ranjit Singh himself, writes Steinbach, "on more than one occasion narrowly escaped assassination by them."² At certain places, Griffin does not have very good words regarding them. "The Maharaja," he writes, "was afraid to interfere too closely with these men; for though little better than drunken savages, they were supposed by the Sikhs to possess a semi-sacred character, and were, moreover, useful when desperate deeds were to be done which the rank and file of the army might have declined..... they were identical in character and in the manner of their onslaught with the Ghazis of Afghanistan and the Sudan, whose fierce and terrible attack shakes the nerves of all but the steadiest and most seasoned troops; but the Sikh soldiers of God drew their courage more from drink and maddening drugs, than from the depths of religious enthusiasm which inspires the wild children of Islam³." Steinbach, too, holds the similar views regarding them⁴. Yet, however, these European writers seem to have erred in not understanding that these people drew their inspiration from Amritsar of which they were supposed to be custodians. A dip into the sacred tank, and an Akali was no more a man, but a lion. Bhang, the drink was though a weakness with him, yet an Akali was moralist, who kept the torch of the Khalsa faith alight with its bravest spirits as enjoined by Guru Govind Singh. Whenever he fought, he

Their
character

Drunkards

A mistake

Custodians

Alight
at torch

1. Steinbach, pp. 104—105.

2. Ibid, p 104.

3. Griffin, pp. 136—137.

4. Steinbach, p104.

Cause dearer fought not for a material prize or for some wordly honour, he fought for a cause, which was ever dear to him more than even his own life.

D—Fauj-i-Qilajat.

Besides all this, the Maharaja had in his service about 10,800 men who garrisoned the important forts like those of Multan, Peshawar, Kangra and Attock. An evrage pay of a garrison infantry soldier was Rs. 6/- per month, the Jumadar receiving Rs. 12/- or more. Every fort was placed under the charge of an officer, called Thanedar. The code of conduct for the men who garrisoned forts, was very strict. None of them could be addicted to wine, nor could the dancing girls be permitted inside a fort. In order further to see that their immoral or lethargic habits be curbed, it was strictly required of these soldiers that none could spend upon himself an amount of money more than one half of the total of his monthly pay. The rest of the money had to be remitted home regularly. Nor could a garrison soldier have dishonest dealings with a shopkeeper, nor a clash with any of the neighbouring civil population.

E—The Artillery.

Ranjit Singh, thus wrote Osborne in 1839, "is very proud of the efficiency and admirable condition of his artillery, and justly so, for no native power has yet possessed so large and well disciplined a corps¹."

Again, writes Lieutenant Barr about the Maharaja's gunners. "The orders were given in French .. we then tried some of his fuzes, which are very good.....All the shots were formed of beaten iron, and cost a rupee each, and the majority of shells were composed of pewter..... it is a matter almost of wonder to behold the perfection to which he (General Court) has brought his artillery".

A perfection

1. 'Camp and Court of Ranjit Singh'.

The artillery of the Maharaja was divided into four classes :—

Divided into
four classes

1. *Top Khana Fili*, or Elephant Batteries.
2. *Top Khana Shutri* or Camel Swivels, also called Zamburaks.
3. *Top Khana Aspi* or Horse Batteries.
4. *Top Khana Gavi* or Bullock Batteries.

The Sikhs before Ranjit Singh, however, were not given very much to the use of artillery. It was therefore difficult for the Maharaja to find leaders for his artillery from among the Punjabis. Some Europeans, such as General Court and Gardner, were therefore especially invited to officer the artillery. Later on, however, the persons like Lehna Singh rose up and distinguished themselves in the profession. This man, according to Griffin, was an original inventor, who cast many a beautiful gun. Mian Qadir Bakhsh was another important man in the line. He was sent by the Maharaja to Ludhiana at State expenses, to receive a training in gunnery. After getting this training, he wrote a book on the subject.

Foreign
officers
employed

Each of the Maharaja's guns had its own name, such as 'Fateh Jung'. Some of them bore Persian inscriptions and some the word 'Sri Akal Sahai', which means 'God be Our Help.' Most of the workshops for the casting of the guns were situated in Lahore, the more important of them being within the fort itself.

Guns had
names,

The total number of guns in the possession of the Maharaja, writes Steinbach, was 176. The total number of swivels being 370¹.

and inscrip-
tions

Total
number

1. Steinbach, p. 95.

F—Manufacture of Weapons.

Lahore, as discussed above, was a very important seat of the manufacture of guns. But besides guns; spears, swords, matchlocks and pistols were also manufactured in this city. Some of these weapons were manufactured at some other places as well. The best armours, including helmets, coats of mail, shields, breast-plates and gauntlets came from Multan, Jummu, Srinagar and Amritsar. Kashmir supplied the best artisans for the purpose. But later on under the supervision of the officers such as Faqir Nur-ud-din, Dr. Honigherger and Lehna Singh Majithia, the number of the trained craftsmen among the Punjabis themselves, began to increase.

G—General Survey of Army.

Divided into
three parts

Taking an over all view, the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh could be divided into three parts.

1. Fauj-i-Khas or special Brigade. This brigade was trained after the European manners, and it fought generally in the frontier wars. Commanded by General Ventura, this Brigade, according to Griffin, consisted of

Regular Infantry.....	3176
Regular Cavalry	1667
Artillery with 34 guns...	855
	5698

Infantry

"The Infantry force," further writes Griffin, "included the Khas battalion, strength 820 men; a Gurkha battalion, 707 men; Deva Singh's battalion, 839 men; and the Sham Sota battalion, 810 men."

Cavalry

"The Cavalry force was composed of a grenadier regiment, strength 730 men; a dragon regiment, 750 men; and a troop of life guards, 187 men."

"The artillery was the corps known as that of Ilahi Bakhsh, and was commanded by a Mussalman general of that name, the best officer in the Sikh army¹".

2. Fauj-i-Ain or Regular army.

Unlike the Akalis and Jagirdari soldiers, this force was organised by the State and was regular. According to Khalsa Darbar Record I, its number in 1838, was 38,242. It consisted of the followings :

Infantry	29,617
Cavalry	4,090
Artillery	4,534

3. Fauj-i-Beqwaid or Irregular force. It consisted of Akalis and Jagirdari force etc; which was all irregular, as discussed above.

The total annual expense incurred by the Maharaja in the payment of his regular army, as according to Shahmat Ali was:

	Rupees
Infantry 28,09,200
Cavalry 24,53,656
Horse Artillery	... 3,24,864
Irregular Sowars	... <u>/2,08,562</u>
Total Rupees	... 1,27,96,482

But, continues Shahmat Ali, "A great many deductions are made from the pay of the troops, which reduce the actual expenditure considerably²"

H—Regimental Dress.

There existed no infantry before Ranjit Singh, as discussed above. A common trooper in the service of a misl chief wore a turban and a pair of short drawers.

1. Griffin, 141-142.

2. 'Sikhs and Afghans', pp. 23—25

The sleeves of his shirt were usually open, and his slippers tight fitting. Under Ranjit Singh, however, some changes took place.

Regular
infantry

Under the Maharaja, thus wrote Steinback, "The costume of the regular infantry is scarlet, with different coloured facings, to distinguish regiments, as in the British service. The trousers are of blue linen; the head dress is a blue turban, with one end loose, and spread so as to entirely cover the head, back of the neck, and shoulders; the belts are of black leather, the arms a musket and bayonet, the manufacture of Lahore¹."

Regular
cavalry

The regular cavalry man, or a dragoon; wore a helmet or steel cap, round which "shawl or scarf" was folded. This scarf, or better, the turban, was usually of crimson silk. A dull red jacket, the trousers of dark blue silk with red stripe, a pair of black belts—one supporting a pouch and the other a bayonet, were the distinguishing features of his dress. Round his waist he fastened a Kamarband. His carbine slung across his back but rested in a bucket fastened to the saddle. The dress of the officers, from top to toe, was of silk, and they were armed only with a sabre. "The regular troops" writes Griffin, "were much less picturesque than the Jagirdari horse. Their dress was a close imitation of the scarlet uniforms worn by the British army, singularly ungraceful on native troops²."

Uniform of
'Ghorcharas'

The uniform of the 'Ghorcharas', as according to Baron Van Hugel, "consisted of a velvet coat or gabardine over which most of them wore a shirt of mail . . . a belt round the waist, richly embroidered in gold, supported the powder-horn, covered with cloth of gold as

1. Steinback, 95—96.

2. Griffin, p. 144.

well as the Persian Katar and the pistol, which many of them carried, in addition to those weapons. Some wore a steel helmet, inlaid with gold, and surmounted with Kalga or black heron's plume; others wore a cap of steel, worked like a cuirass in rings. The left arm is often covered from and to the elbow with a steel cuff inlaid with gold. The round *sikh* shield hangs on the back, fastened with straps across the chest, a quiver at the right side, and a bow slung at the back being carried as part of the equipment; a bag made in the belt holds the balls and a tall buyonet, frequently ornamented with gold, held in the right hand when the man is on foot, and carried over the shoulder, when in the saddle, completes the dress¹.

The uniform of the irregular cavalry men consisted besides armour, spears and shields, the dresses of every colour. There was no uniformity. "Some wore a shirt of mail, with a helmet, inlaid with gold and a Kalgi or herone's plume, others were gay, with the many coloured splendours of velvet and silk, with pink or yellow muslin turbans, and gold embroidered belts, carrying their sword and powder-horn. All wore at the back, the small round shield of tough buffalo hide. The magnificent horsemen were armed, some with bones and arrows but the majority with match locks, with which they made excellent practice." "The irregular levies and jagirdari contingents were the picturesque element in the Maharaja's reviews."²"

The Artilleryman wore red turban, black waist with cross belts and scabbard ornamented in brass, long boots and white trousers. The body-guards of the Maharaja dressed differently, in a cloth of scarlet or yellow colours.

Irregular cavalry

Artillery-man

1. B. Hugal, 'Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab', p. 241—242.

2. Griffin : "Ranjit Singh", pp. 143—145.

Yellow satin was generally used in their uniforms, and shawls or scarfs formed a major feature of their uniform.

I—No Racial Bias.

One of the most cardinal features of his army administration was, the Maharaja's efforts to secure expert hands for the training and command of his soldiers without any racial, religious or national bias. Besides Indians and the Punjabis, the Maharaja's army, as according to Gordner, included officers—Italians, Frenchmen, Americans, Englishmen, Anglo-Indians, Spaniards, Greeks and Russians. The total number of these European officers in the Maharaja's army, according to the British record, was 20. Carmichael Smyth's list, however, counts 39 names, whereas Gordner gives the number 42. At the head of these foreign officers, writes W. L. M'Gregor, "are Generals Ventura and Allard; the former is an Italian by birth, the latter a Frenchman. Both arrived in the Punjab about the same time, and they have always been on the best terms with each other¹".

No. of
European
officers

Agreement

The agreement entered into by Generals Ventura, Allard, and other European army officers, according to Grey and Garrett, was "to domesticate themselves in the country by marriage, not to eat beef, not to smoke tobacco in public; to permit their beards to grow, to take care not to offend against Sikh religion, and if required, to fight against their own country²."

Europeon Distrusted by People.

Although, in the army of the Maharaja, battalions trained in Europeon fashion, existed since 1807, regular

1. See his History of the Sikhs, Vol. I, pp. 254—262.

2. European Adventurers of Northern India,' p. 12.

introduction of European officers seems to have taken place much later, Allard and Ventura, according to an account joined in 1822. The presence of these European officers was not liked by the Indian soldiers in the beginning, and even the heir—apparent, prince Kharak Singh, did not take upon them with any favour, yet as the time passed, the distrust of the people waned and the European officers seem to have given a good account of their capabilities to mould themselves according to their environment.

Towards the closing years of his life, however, Ranjit Singh's notions regarding the value of their services seemed to have changed, and he, thus writes M'Gregor, "either fancies that he can dispense with them altogether, or what is more probable, he gauges the pay which every gentlemen resorting thither expects for his services."¹ The general people too did not look upon them with friendly eyes. The chaos that followed Ranjit Singh's death, made their lives precarious. Col. Foulker an English officer, was murdered, the houses of Generals Court and Ventura were plundered, and they all fled the country.

Notion
changed

I. The General Standard

The general standard of the Maharaja's army has been commented upon variously by various writers.

Some of the shortcomings in the system pointed out by some writers were that a portion of Ranjit Singh's military strength consisted of the aggregate of irregular contingents raised and commanded by jagirdars." The men brought up to the standards by each great jagirdar looked to him as their personal chief and were, therefore, less loyal to the Maharaja." More-over these jagirdars did not keep their soldiers and their animals in proper condition, and although the Maharaja did keep a strict watch upon them and even men of the status of Hari

Irregular
contingents

Jagirdars
corrupt

Singh Nalwa could not escape punishment in case of being guilty of neglect in the matter, the Maharaja himself considered this part of the army only less reliable than the regular contingents.

Thus writes Griffin regarding the irregular and jagirdari contingents. These were the picturesque element in the Maharaj's views. Many of the men were well-to-do country gentlemen, the sons, relations, or clans-men of the chiefs who placed them in the field and maintained them there, and whose personal credit was concerned in their splendid appearance! ¹

The regiments of Akalis have been mentioned above. There is no doubt that despite their indisciplined and untamed habits, the Maharaja was able to make a good use of them. But his successors less capable and less informed, had a hell of job with them.

In fact the army as a whole, had never been taught to be subservient to civil authorities. During this life-time, the Maharaja had always been busy in wars and conquests, and therefore the military officers and military leaders gathered more importance than the civilians did. Had Ranjit Singh lived to see the days of comparatively more peace and tranquility, the supremacy of the civilians over the army men might have been established. But this did not happen, and the results after his death were natural, as Payne writes: "The army of the Khalsa was now, to all intents and purposes, a self-governing body. Its affairs were conducted by panchyats or councils of "five" representing each company, and elected by the soldiers themselves.²"

Nor did there exist a regular system of payments to the soldiers. "More men were kept at hand, in particular cases, than could be easily paid for and it was the habit to stave off payment by some expedient or other."

Akali
indiscipline

No Civil
supremacy

Results
after death

No regular
payments

1. Ranjit Singh, p. 143.

2. 'A Short History of the Sikhs, p. 151.

According to a contemporary, "No pensions were, or are, assigned to the soldiery for long service, nor is there any provision for the widows and the families of those who die, or are killed in the service of the state. Promotions, instead of being the sight of the good soldier in order of seniority or the reward of merit in the various grades is frequently effected by bribery. In higher ranks, advancement is obtained by the judicious application of the douceur to the plam of the favourites at court, or the military chieftains about the person of the Sovereign."

No pensions etc.

"Only the European officers were handsomely paid." But during his last year Ranjit Singh began to distrust them, and some of them actually played the part of traitors to the Lahore Government. Moreover, the sardars were always jealous of them, and most of them were dismissed during the anarchy that ensued after Ranjit Singh.

Only Europeans

There was no uniform dress, which varied from one part of the army to the other. And moreover men of different nationalities and different racial affiliations had been recruited in the Maharaja's army. While magnetic influence of the Maharaja was able to keep them together after his death they were bound to go different ways.

No uniform dress

According to some, the westernisation of the army rather weakened it, instead of strengthening, and that was the reason that this army of the Sikhs, with the help which Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Bahadur fought against Imperial Mughals with high credit in the days of Mughal glory and fame, could not inspire the Maharaja with a courage to fight the British.

Westernisation weakened it

But despite all the shortcomings in the Maharaja's military organisation, we will have to judge its merit only in the battlefield. Thus writes Sir Charles Gough, the British Commander-in-Chief who fought their first battle against the Sikhs. "It has been said—and the words undoubtedly contain a general truth—that among

System praised

non-European peoples the most successful opponents of British arms have been those who, like Hyder Ali and Holkar, made no attempt to adopt alien methods of fighting, but held to their own native habits, conducting a guerilla warfare on a huge scale avoiding pitched battles, and easily rallying their forces after a contest. Nevertheless the struggle with the Sikhs seems to present an exception to the rule..... The Sikh soldiery fought with a discipline and stubbornness unequalled in our experience of native warfare; and their doing so was largely due to the methods introduced by Ranjit Singh. And again he writes : "The Sikhs were better adapted to learn and to assimilate the European methods of fighting than any other native population¹".

Referring to the "terrible courage" of Sikh troops at Sobraon, wrote Sir Charles Gough to Sir Robert Peel, the British Prime Minister : "Policy precluded me from publicly recording my sentiments on the splendid gallantry of our fallen foe, or to record the acts of heroism displayed, not only individually but almost collectively by the Sikh sirdars and army, and I declare, were it not from a deep conviction that my country's good required the sacrifice, I could have wept to have witnessed the fearful slaughter of so devoted a body of men.²"

"Certain it is that there would have been a different story to tell, if the 'body of men' had not been commanded by traitors.³" Ranjit Singh, as according to Sinha, had indeed "transformed a rabble of horsemen into the most efficient fighting machine.⁴"

Westernisation
not harmful

Account
given

But for
traitors

1. The Sikhs & The Sikhs Wars, p. 43.

2. Quoted in Rait, Life of Lord Gough, (westminster, 1903, ii, p. 108).

3. J. Mahajan, Annexation of Punjab, p. 32.

4. See N. K. Sinha, Ranjit Singh, pp. 156—1172.

CHAPTER XII

Chiefs of The Punjab

A—Sada Kaur

The Sikh community is known for its daring adventures and a spirited and devotional courage, not only among its men-folk but among its women-folk as well. Not few instances are known, where women girded up their loins and accomplished wonders, where their men had been failed by destiny. And Sada Kaur is one of such blessed souls who have studded the pages of the Sikh History.

Daughter of Sardar Daswandha Singh Alkol she was born in 1762. Her family had a long tradition of courageous and brave doings, and brought up in an heroic surrounding, not un-naturally, she herself developed those qualities of human spirit, which people get only after devoted training under expert hands.

Born n
1762.

Sada Kaur, when she came of age, was married to Gurbax Singh, the son of Jai Singh, the famous chief of the Kanheya misl, who had played an important part in the early training of Ranjit Singh's father, Maha Singh. But she was not destined to enjoy her married life for long. In 1784, when the combined forces of Maha Singh, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Sansar Chand Katoch attacked the Kanheyas at ¹Achal, two miles south of Batala, Gurbux Singh was one of those who lost his life in the battle-field.

Married

Widow
1784

1. See Chapter I, P. 11-13

Thus widowed, whereas an ordinary woman should have resigned herself to fate and vanished into the limb to of oblivion, Sada Kaur determined herself to fight the destiny and carve out for herself a place known only to administrative and diplomatic talents¹.

Mother-in-law of Ranjit Singh,

Shortly after when the father-in-law of Sada Kaur also bid her farewell for ever, she was left alone to lead 8,000 soldiers of her misl, and to do as best for herself and for them as she could. The first diplomatic plan which sprang up from her productive mind was to end the feud between Sukerchakias and the Kanheyas for ever and to establish peace between the two misls. She proposed marriage between her only daughter Mehtab Kaur and the handsome little son of Maha Singh. Her purpose in the proposal being that she would be able to make Ranjit Singh as her stepping stone, and by uniting the strength and resources of the two families, she would carve out for herself a kingdom. The proposal was promptly accepted, but in the game of diplomacy, her son in-law was more than a match for her, and as the future history was to show, she herself played precisely the same role, as she had designed for the son of Maha Singh. One year after the betrothal of her little daughter, the marriage between Mehtab Kaur and Ranjit Singh was solemnised. This was done in 1785².

and his
guardian.

Maha Singh died in 1792, at the young age of 27, and while at his death-bed, he handed over the charge of his 12 years old son to Sada Kaur. For about six or seven years, she conducted the affairs of the two misls, but after this Ranjit Singh came of age. There was no more a necessity of her putting herself to trouble for Sukerchakia administrative problems.

1. Lachhi Ram, 'Jang Batala', P. 42

2. Griffin, 'Chiefs of Punjab', P. 161.

Helped
conquer
Lahore

In 1799, as we have studied, the combined forces of Ranjit Singh and Sada Kaur marched upon Lahore and occupied the political capital of the Punjab. Here she played an important part in winning her son-in-law a victory¹. As previously planned, Sada Kaur marched upon the Delhi gate of the city, while Ranjit marched on the Lahori gate, and after entering into the city, it was she who got bombardment on the walls of the fort stopped and instead suggested a peaceful plan of offering safe conduct and a good jagir to Chet Singh if he vacated the fort handing it over to Ranjit Singh. The plan was accepted by both the sides. Later she played an important part in settling the citizens to peaceful pursuits of life.

and
Amritsar.

Later on, Amritsar was occupied by Ranjit Singh. And here again she played an important part in getting the city vacated peacefully and in preventing any violation of the city's sanctity².

Restored
peace in
Hazara

In 1819, Makhan Singh, the Nazim of Rawalpindi had been killed while trying to suppress up-risings in Hazara. Hukma Singh Chimni, the Kiladar of Attock hearing this news, marched upon the villages, the inhabitants of which had killed Makhan Singh, and reduced Sultanpur and Mora etc. of these villages to ashes³. He sent a report to the Maharaja suggesting that a strong expedition should be despatched to Hazara to establish complete peace and order in the country. It was a formidable job, which only capable military minds could perform. The Maharaja sent Sada Kaur with Sher Singh, Sham Singh Attariwala and 6,000 soldiers for the purpose. A bloody action was fought with the rebellious elements on the Gand-gir hills. Sada Kaur is herself said to have led

1. See Chapter III P.31—37; Latif, P. 349.

2. See Chapter III, P. 40—41

3. See Wilson, Report on Hazara, P. 126. —

Sword in hand

her soldiers with a naked sword in her hand, which inspired her followers. Just when the battle was at its hottest, she all of a sudden ordered her troops to move back a few steps. This gave an impression to the enemy as if the Khalsa forces were on their flight, they came out to pursue them, when to their astonishment, the Khalsa fell upon them slaughtering a good number of them instantaneously. The enemy surrendered, but some fled, pursued by youthful Dewan Ram Dayal, who was killed by them just when he turned to come back.

Ram Dayal killed

Punishments

When Sada Kaur heard of it, befitting punishments were given to the culprits. The rebellious people collected together thereafter and sent their leaders to Sada Kaur to beg forgiveness. Sada Kaur thereupon called all the important persons of the place at a gathering, and read out to them a warning that unless they behaved themselves properly, they would be seriously dealt with. Her way of dealing with them impressed the people and thus peace was restored.

Police posts

After this, small fortresses and police posts were established at different places¹, and Sada Kaur came back, and her services were very much appreciated by the Maharaja.

Differences

In 1823, however, serious differences developed between Sada Kaur and Ranjit Singh on Wadni². The Maharaja suspected her to be in correspondence with the British, and Sada Kanr was informed by him to retire herself from an active life.

Retired life.

Died 1832.

Sada Kaur herself being by this time an old woman, desired it, and spent rest of her life at Amritsar, where she died in December 1832, at the ripe age of 70. Having heard of her death, the Maharaja reached Amritsar immediately along with Princes Nau Nihal Singh and Sher Singh and performed her cremation rites in befitting manners.

1. Wilson, P. 127.

2. See Chapter VII P. 101—103.

B—Fateh Singh Ahluwalia.

Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who had led the Sikhs through many a difficult terrain, and who was founder of the famous misl of the Ahluwalias, had died childless in 1783. He was succeeded by Sardar Bhag Singh Ahluwalia to the leadership of his misl. Bhag Singh died in 1801, and after his death his son Fateh Singh came to power.

Son of
Bhag Singh.

Fateh Singh had been born in 1784. He was quite young of age when he heard of Ranjit Singh's conquest of Lahore. He hurried thither, congratulated the Maharaja for his achievement, and promised his full support in the consolidation of Sikh Raj in the Punjab. The two chiefs exchanged their turbans in 1802, as a mark of perpetual friendship¹, and began to plan their future course of action.

Born 1784

Friendship
with
Maharaja

Kasur had been giving trouble to the Maharaja. Fateh Singh accompanied him at the head of his 1,500 soldiers, when he marched upon the territory in 1803. Here Fateh Singh for the first time displayed his military genius, which made the Maharaja really proud of him. It has already been discussed how a tribute was realised from Kasur and the Khalsa forces returned.

Marched
upon Kasur

When the Maharaja marched upon Amritsar, the Ahluwalia Sardar accompanied him in the expedition, and he, along with Sada Kaur, made every effort to see the things settled without any violation of the sanctity of this city of Guru Ram Das. That he was a man of patient and mature deliberation at this young age is further proved from the fact, that when in 1805, Holkar entered Punjab and requested help from the Maharaja against the English, he advised him firmly to desist from any such action, which should have placed the infant

Amritsar
expeditionAgainst
Holkar

1. See Chapter III, P. 38-39.

Holkar's State

Sikh State in a jeopardy¹. It was as a result of his special efforts that later a treaty was signed by General Lake and Holkar, where-by some territory south of the Chambal, including the State of Indore was secured to the Maratha chief². How much was Holkar obliged to Fateh Singh and the Maharaja, the idea regarding it may be had from his own words³, which translated freely into English would mean : "By getting this treaty signed you have, as if, established my state anew. I and my family will never forget this act of friendship of yours."

Friendship with Lake.

Not was General Lake himself less obliged for this act of Fateh Singh. Both Fateh Singh and General Lake exchanged some beautiful presents between them⁴.

Cis-Sutlej expeditions

In the Cis-Sutlej expeditions of the Maharaja, Fateh Singh accompanied him, as we have discussed and was given a due share of the territories thus conquered. In 1808, Fateh Singh led a successful expedition against Ahmed Khan Sial of Jhang, resulting in the annexation of that territory to the Lahore authority. We have studied how a very explosive situation had developed between Sikhs and the English, before the Treaty of Amritsar was signed. The preparations from both the sides had been made, and it was timely advice of Fateh Singh which to a considerable extent, resulted in the signing of the Treaty. The proof of the part played by Fateh Singh at this time, is clearly available in Metcalf's letter to the Government of India, in which he mentioned as to how in high esteem was the Sardar kept by the Maharaja⁵.

Conquered Jhang

Amritsar Treaty

Kangra

Fateh Singh also played an important part in the Maharaja's relations with Sansar Chand Katoch, and in ultimate Sikh occupation of the fort of Kangra.

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1. See Anglo-Sikh Relations, P. 84—87
 2. Aitcheson, 'A collection of Treaties and Engagements', IX, P. 22.
 3. Dewan Ramjas, 'Twarikh-i-Kapurthala', P. 374.
 4. Latif, P. 317.
 5. Camp Gogiana, Nov. 8, 1808.

That Fateh Singh occupied a position of high respect State affairs in the eyes of the Lahore Darbar, is proved from the fact that on more than one occasion, when the Maharaja left on some serious expedition, Fateh Singh was left behind to look after the State affairs in his absence. This happened in 1810, when the Maharaja marched towards Multan and in 1819 when he marched towards Kashmir.

As we have discussed in the chapter on the 'Anglo-Sikh Relations' for some time there developed some mis-understanding between Maharaja and the Ahluwalia Sardar, which resulted in Fateh Singh's trying to seek British protection. It was not long before, however, that the friendly relations between the two were restored¹.

Mis-understanding

Friendship restored

Died 1835

Fateh Singh died in 1836, three years before the death of the Maharaja, and in him Ranjit Singh lost an honest friend, who played not an insignificant part in the development and consolidation of his power in the Punjab.

C—Hari Singh Nalwa

Hari Singh was born at Gujranwala in 1751. He was only seven years of age when his father, Sardar Gurdial Singh died, and the child was left to his maternal uncle to be brought up. Although no regular arrangement had been made for the military training of the child, yet by his personal efforts and interest, he is said to have learnt almost all the prevailing arts of fight, with and without weapons, by the age of 15.

Born in
1751

Father died

Maternal
uncle

Chosen

It is said that the Maharaja used to hold a grand Darbar every year, at which young men from every part of the country collected to show their fighting qualities, and the Maharaja selected the best among them to be included in the country's forces. One such Darbar was

1. See for details, *Umdat-ul-Twarikh*, ii, P. 343.

held in 1805, in which Hari Singh having shown the best of his qualities, he was included in the Maharaja's 'Fauj-i-khas'.

Killed a tiger

Shortly after his recruitment into Maharaja's services, one day he accompanied the Maharaja in his hunting expedition, where he is said to have cloven the head of a tiger, which, according to Hugel, won him the title of Nalwa¹. The story runs that Raja Nal had been expert in killing lions, and when Hari Singh killed the one, he began to be known as Hari Singh Nal. The word Nal later deformed became Nalwa.

Became Nalwa

By his sagacity and prudence, and by his qualities not only of a soldier but also of an efficient administrator, the Nalwa Sardar had won for himself such a place in the heart of the Maharaja that once he directly told him: "To rule a kingdom it is necessary to have men like you".

Conquest of Kasur

It was in 1807, at the time of the conquest of Kasur that Nalwa gave the first proof of his fighting capabilities.

Sialkot

In 1810, he led an expedition against Sialkot. For two days the Khalsa troops showed no decisive results, on the third day Nalwa mustering up a great courage, and with a flag of the Maharaja in his hands, ran up to the rampart, and scaling the walls of the fort, planted the flag. It was a signal for the army to make a determined dash and the fort was taken.

Multan

In 1810, when Multan was attacked, Nalwa played daring part of a devoted soldier, and was wounded in the battle-field. In 1813, along with Mohkem Chand, Nalwa made a mark in his successful battle at Hazro against the Afghans. In 1815, he subdued some chiefs

1. Travels, P. 254.

2. Umdat-ul-Twarikh, iii, P. 379.

of the submountainous territories of Kashmir, including Rajauri and also collected tributes from some chiefs on the banks of the Chenab. In 1818, Nalwa participated in an attack upon Multan under the nominal leadership of Prince Kharak Singh, and conquered the territory finally¹. In 1819, he led one of the three armies attacking Kashmir², and though by the time he reached, the Afghans had already capitulated, he subdued some of the sub-chiefs who still resisted the Sikh arms, thus ending the 500 years old rule of the Mahammedans in the valley.

Submountainous
chiefs

Kashmir

Later on he was appointed governor of the valley. And here again he gave a very creditable account of himself³.

An important incident occurred in November 1821. The Nalwa Sardar had been returning to Lahore via Muzaffarabad with 7,000 troops and much treasure. About 30,000 people of Hazara collected at Mangli Pass and intercepted him demanding a toll. Nalwa tried to persuade them to desist from such an action; but not being successful in this, he gave them a square battle, and routed 30,000 with his 7,000 killing 2,000 Afghans at the spot⁴. It was a resounding victory after which, Nalwa was appointed governor of Hazara.

The Mangli
Pass battle.Governor
of Hazara.

Here again, he gave a very praiseworthy account of himself and was a perfect success where successive governors, Mohkam Chand and Ram Dyal had been slain. Sada Kaur and Sher Singh too had followed only a policy of conciliation. During his governorship of Hazara, he built a new town of Haripur, known after his name, and the fort of Kishangarh, which are living memories of his feats till the modern times.

Creditable
account.

1. See Conquest of Multan, P. 53—59
2. See Conquest of Kashmir, P. 59—65
3. See Administration and Consolidation of Kashmir, P. 77—81
4. Maulvi Miran Baksh, 'Tariikh-i-Hazara', P. 168.

Naushera
and
Sangram

At Naushera and Sangram, across the river Attock near the Shershahi road, the Khalsa troops fought heroic battle with Afghans twenty times their number. This resounding success of the Khalsa against so powerful an army is an incident in the Sikh History, which any nation in the world will be proud to own. The credit goes to Nalwa.

Annexation
of Peshawar

We have discussed, how Peshawar was annexed and what diplomacy was used in the execution of the design. And in this again, Nalwa had a commanding hand¹. The up risings revolt of Sayad Ahmad, a fanatic of Peshawar, had also been suppressed by Nalwa himself. Later when Dost Mohammad declared a jihad against the Sikhs, "Hari Singh, as usual, was impatient and wanted to have a straight fight with an army of 20,000 under his command, but Ranjit Singh ordered him not to take a chance till he came and tried diplomatic methods²."

Governor

Later on, he was appointed governor of Peshawar³, and we have studied how and in what circumstances was he killed while protecting the fort of Jamrud, on April 30, 1837.

Killed
1837

Mis-appropriation.

In money matters, the Nalwa Sardar was not said to have been very honest. And many times, it is said he reported false raids and appropriated money. Once when at a review, his battalions had been found below the stipulated strength, he was heavily fined by the Maharaja. When he died, he had a Jagir worth Rs. 3,67,100 of annual income, but it was all confiscated by the Maharaja, his son being given only a minor post. But this does not mean that the Maharaja was in any way less grateful to him for the part he had played in

1. Conquest of Peshawar, P. 65—75

2. Sikh Review, August, 1957. An article by Prem Nath Seth.

3. See Account of Peshawar Administration P. 81—82

the making of his empire. The jagirs were in fact granted for one's life time only with few exceptions, so that hereditary jagirdars may not bring the evil which had been the bane of the medieval times.

When Nalwa died, the Maharaja shed tears from the eyes of his soul. He said that he had lost a 'Nimak halal' servant of the Khalsa¹. And there was no doubt in what he said.

D—Faqir Aziz-ud-Din.

Born in 1780, Aziz-ud-Din was the eldest son of Faqir Gulam Mohi-ud-Din, a follower of medical profession. At a very young age Aziz-ud-Din was sent for training in his ancestral profession to a famous authority on the subject, Vaid Lala Hakim Rai.

Born 1780

Medical practitioner

Maharaja's attention

Health Officer

Once in 1799, Ranjit Singh having some trouble in his eyes, Hakim Rai was called for treatment. Hakim Rai brought with him his genius disciple Aziz-ud-Din as well. The keen and searching eye of the Maharaja having fallen upon the boy, a couple of days after his visit in the palace, the Maharaja requisitioned his services from his teacher, and to start with, he was appointed Health Officer of the city of Lahore. A jagir worth Rs. 5,000 of annual income consisting of Budho and Shirkpur was granted to him.

In 1807, as we have² discussed, the Faqir along with Sardar Fateh Singh Kalianwala, was sent by the Maharaja to Kasur, as a representative of the Lahore Government, to settle the affairs with the Nawab peacefully. The latter having shown haughty attitude, his country was attacked and annexed to the Lahore authority. On his request the forgiving Faqir approached the Maharaja and secured the Nawab the jagir of Mamdot,

To Kasur

1. Umdat-ul-Twarikh, iii, P. 395.

2. See Chapter IV P. 42—43

Secured
jagir

worth Rs. 52,000 of annual income¹, which continued with his descendants even till the modern times.

Amritsar
Treaty

The Faqir played an important part in the Anglo-Sikh affairs in 1808-9, leading to the Treaty of Amritsar. This created so good an impression upon the Maharaja that the Faqir became an official adviser to the Darbar in diplomatic affairs, shortly after and continued in that position till his death.

Adviser

In 1810, the Faqir was sent with the Khalsa forces to subdue some territories adjoining Gujerat. Although he did succeed ultimately in the mission, he does not seem to have shown a promise in this line as in diplomatic assignments. In 1813, the Faqir was appointed as an administrator for Chuch and adjoining territories, and here too he gave a good account of himself. He was equally successful in some diplomatic assignments with Yar Mohamad and Sayad Ahmad.

Not
enviable

In 1831, the Maharaja sent a mission to meet the Governor-General at Simla in connection with his forthcoming meeting with him at Rupar. The Faqir being one of its members, he displayed his genius quite creditably. An interesting incident is told. It is said that during his visit at Simla a British officer once asked the Faqir as to which of his eyes had the Maharaja lost during his illness. The reply of the Faqir was simple and yet so impressive that it completely disarmed the questioner. He answered that the halo of his Maharaja was so bright that he had never dared to see him in his face².

Chuch

To Simla

Disarmed
the
questioner

Dost
Mohammad

Dost Mohammad had never reconciled himself to the loss of Peshawar to the Sikhs. Having failed³ in his

1. Col. Massi, P. 171.

2. Griffin, i, P. 99.

attempts to defeat the Sikhs in 1835, he now appealed to the Maharaja to send some responsible representative of his to settle the boundary dispute peacefully with him. The Maharaja considered none to be more suitable for the purpose than the Faqir, who was thus assigned this duty. Dost Mohammad, however, had intended to play intrigue, and when the Faqir reached his court, he was put into captivity, and asked to send a message to his Maharaja to return Peshawar if he desired his release. The Faqir, however, proved equal to the occasion, and was ultimately able to convince the Amir of the serious consequences that he was entailing upon himself thereby. Promising to avoid retribution on the part of the Maharaja for his action, he got himself released. When the Maharaja heard of it, he boiled with rage and ordered the Nalwa Sardar to march on Jallalabad forthwith. True to his promise, the Faqir however requested the Maharaja to desist from the action and thus was a serious clash avoided.

A patient thinker, man of peaceful dispositions and benevolent qualities of heart and mind, the Faqir advised the Maharaja more than once to avoid a clash with the British. The Maharaja died in 1839, but the Faqir continued enjoying the respect of the Lahore Darbar till 1844 when on December 3, at the middle age of 45, he left this mortal world, and went the way of all, the poor and rich, the high and low, who played their part on the stage of life and passed away.

E—Dewan Mohkam Chand

Not a born soldier, Dewan Mohkam Chand was the son of a small shop-keeper named Baisakhi Mal, of village Kunjah in District Gujrat. An interesting story is told as to how the one-eye monarch, Ranjit Singh, came to discover this boy and military genius in this shop-keeper's son.

deceived
Maharaja

Captivity

Persuasive

Released

Died 1844.

Son of a
shop-keeper

Discovered

It is said that once, in 1806, the Maharaja happened to come to this village on a tour. While his procession was passing through a street, his eyes fell upon a boy, tender of age, but with excellent physique and imposing manly looks. The Maharaja stopped his horse immediately, called him anigh, and addressed him thus : 'Come along with me boy, and put your body to some good use.' The boy bowed his head, and began to run before the Maharaja's horse. Reaching the place where the Maharaja was staying, the Maharaja got him changed from loose dress into a military attire, and being pleased with his new looks, he put him under military training.

Kotkapura
Mukatsar
Dharamkot

Faridkot

Jandiala,
Budhowal,
Jagraon,

The boy was the future Dewan, Mohkam Chand. It was not long before Mohkam Chand became a commander of Maharaja's forces. He captured Kot Kapura, Mukatsar and Dharamkot, and shortly after, marched with invincible Khalsa army on Fridkot, realising from its chief a nazrana of Rs. 20,000.

In 1806, when the Maharaja crossed the river Sutlej to settle the dispute of Doladhi¹, Mohkam Chand accompanied him thither, and on their way back, it was Mohkam Chand who marched upon Jandiala, Budhowal, Jagraon, Kot Talwandi and Sanewal, and brought these territories under the Maharaja's subjection. Some of these territories were later distributed by the Maharaja among his friends—Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Jaswant Singh of Nabha and the chief of Jind. The Maharaja was so much pleased with Mohkam Chand's daring spirit, that he granted him a big jagir of 71 villages, worth about Rs. 40,000 of annual income, including Jagraon, Mauza Gilakot and Talwandi².

1. See Chapter VI, P. 88-89

2. Griffin, 'The Punjab Chiefs', P. 88.

In 1807, Mohkam Chand annexed to the Khalsa Raj, the productive and wide lands of the Jullundur Doab, and pleased with him, the Maharaja granted him another jagir worth Rs. 1½ lakhs of yearly income and appointed him as Nazim of this territory. In the coming year, the Dewan added another fifteen villages to the Maharaja's territory, along with Himatpur, Patoki and Wadni, whole of which was later granted to Sada Kaur¹.

Julluudur
Doab.

Nazim

Himatpur,
Patoki and
Wadni.

After signing Treaty of Amritsar with the British, against the British construction of a cantonment in Ludhiana, Ranjit Singh appointed the Dewan to survey trans-Sutlej territories and to decide as to where could a Sikh fort be built to check the British designs. Phillore was selected by the Dewan as the best site from strategical point of view. The proposal of the Dewan was accepted, and the Dewan himself was put in-charge of the fort's construction.

The fort of
Phillore

Sultan Mohamad of Bhimber had been giving some trouble to the Sikhs. The fort of Phillore having been completed, the Maharaja considered Mohkam Chand to be the most suitable person to lead an expedition against him. Although Sultan gave a tough battle to Mohkam Chand, the latter carried the day as a result of his organising genius. The Sultan was captured and despatched to the Maharaja in chains. The territory was annexed to the Maharaja's authority. Some people had been feeling restive in the Jullundur Doab under their new system. On his arrival back, they were all set aright.

Bhimber
annexed

Shortly after this in November 1811, opening ceremony of the fort at Phillore was performed. After completing the 'Akhand Path', the Maharaja held a grand Darbar in the fort, in which Mohkam Chand's services were highly praised. It was here that the title of

Peace in
Doab

1. See Latif, History of the Punjab.

The title
and honour

'Dewan' was conferred upon Mohkam Chand, along with a big and beautiful elephant, a high priced sword and a beautiful robe of honour, as a mark of appreciation of his services.

Kulu
subdued

In 1812, the Dewan brought Kulu and some other adjoining hill territories under Khalsa subjection. It was Mohkam Chand who led the first expedition¹ against Kashmir and secured the person of Shah Shuja from that country. The fort of Attock was occupied by the Sikh forces under the command of Mohkam Chand and Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa. And later in the fateful battles of Chuch and Hazro as well, Mohkam Chand took a leading part thereby giving a crushing defeat to Afghans.

Kashmir

Chu chand
Hazro

A great
builder

Mohkam Chand's actions against Afghans won him acclaims of the Khalsa and fame and name of one of the foremost and most forceful military minds of the Darbar. Before closing the account of the life of this one of the great builders of the Sikh power, it would be interesting to relate an incident in his life to show his love for the cause he had taken up.

Ochterlo-
ney's visit
at Phillore.

In 1812, when the marriage of Kharak Singh was celebrated, Ochterloney came as representative of the British Government to attend the function. On this occasion, he took an opportunity one day of requesting the Maharaja to show him the fort of Phillore from inside. The Maharaja agreed to take him to the fort the next morning. But when Mohkam Chand heard of it, he took it ill, that an enemy of the Khalsa should be permitted to see inside of a fort, which may sometime have to be used against him or his kinsfolk. Before the Maharaja and Ochterloney, therefore, could reach the fort the next morning, Mohkam Chand closed its gates;

1.—See Chapter V P. 59—65; also see Sinha, P. 67; M 'Gregor', i P. 169; Latif, P. 395; and Amar Nath, 'Zafarnama Ranjit Singh', P. 73.

on the arrival of the Maharaja outside, he took out his sword and presenting it to him he asked the Maharaja to kill him before he entered the fort along with Phiran-gis. Wise man, as the Maharaja was, he respected his servant's sentiments and told Ochterloney that he alone was not the owner of the Sikh State, he was only a share-holder with all the persons such as the Dewan was, and therefore could not do the things against their wishes. Ochterloney offered to go back without fulfilling the purpose they had come for¹.

Mohkam died on October 16, 1814, at the age of 71. At the time of his death he held a Jagir worth Rs. 6,42,161 of annual income. This was besides the jagirs held by his sons, grand sons or other relations. This alone is a positive proof of the high esteem in which this son of a shop-keeper was held by the Maharaja.

Died rich
1814.

1.—Ochterloney to chief Secretary, Govt. of India, Feb 27, 1912;
Griffin, P. 565

The causes

On July 29, 1839, Ranjit Singh died "as like the old lion as he had lived¹." He had "found the Punjab a waning confederacy, a prey to the Marathas, and ready to submit to English supremacy. He consolidated the numerous petty states into a kingdom, he wrested from Kabul the fairest of its provinces, and he gave the potent English no cause for interference²." "He inherited mutiny," we could rather say in the words of Jagmohan Mahajan, "and created discipline, found chaos and produced order; and succeeded by the sustained effort of a lifetime in carving out a compact kingdom for himself. But his achievement, though highly remarkable, was personal and consequently ephemeral". His rule was founded on the feelings of a people, but it involved the joint action of the necessary principles of military order and territorial extension, and when a limit had been set to Sikh dominion, and his own commanding genius was no more, the vital spirit of his race began to consume itself in domestic contentions³.

Empires rise but to fall. And the Sikh empire was not an exception. To throw responsibility, for its downfall on this factor or that, may perhaps be unjust, yet it is a matter of historical study, and we must therefore investigate impartially into the causes which led to the Sikh decline.

1. Payne, p. 134.

2. Cunningham, History of the Punjab.

3. 'Circumstance leading to Annexation of Punjab', p. 15.

4. Cunningham, History of the Punjab.

CHAPTER XIII

Downfall of the Sikh Power

A—Personal Responsibility of Ranjit Singh

It seems paradoxical and ironical, indeed, that the founder of an empire should be charged with the responsibility of its destruction. Yet it has been true of so many men and at so many places and nothing could be more just than to criticise Ranjit Singh as well, on this score.

A very hard drinker as he was, "it was his indulgence in frequent and fiery potations which killed him," before he should have died. But more. "Like most men who have been distinguished in history for administrative vigour and military genius, Ranjit Singh was very susceptible to faminine influence." He married eighteen wives "nine by the orthodox ceremonial and nine by the simpler rite of throwing the sheet" (chadra dalna). But of his mistresses and concubines, the chronicle is too scandalous for more than a passing mention in this place. "When he had secured the legitimate succession in the person of his son Kharak Singh, he cared little for the discreditable intrigues of his harem. Many children were fathered upon him by these ladies, either for political objects¹ or in the hope of obtaining his special favour..... To his son, Kharak Singh, and to his grandson, Nau Nihal Singh, he sent several ladies of more than doubtful reputation from his own zenana; one of these being the beautiful Isar Kour, who was so cruelly forced to become Sati on the death of Maharaja Kharak Singh²."

Hard
drinker

Faminine
influence

Many
children

1. The case of his two sons through Mehtab Kaur, which has been mentioned elsewhere, is one instance. See Latif, History of the Punjab, Vol. II., p. 370, where he even gives the names of the persons from whom the two sons were procured. Sher Singh was purchased from his father Nihala, a chintz weaver, a native of Mukerian, and Tara Singh from a Mahommesson woman, daughter of Manki, a slave girl of Mehtab Kaur.

2. Griffin, pp. 106—107.

None
undisputed

The result of all these activities of the Maharaja was that, after the death of Nau Nihal Singh, none remained with undisputed claim to throne.¹ And we know that one of the causes of intrigues against Dalip Singh himself was that his legitimacy as being the son of Ranjit Singh was suspected.

No training

And then, as he accepted every son fathered upon him, though only with a pinch of salt, he cared little to see that those who got this honour, should prove themselves worthy of it. No training was imparted to them in state-craft or in diplomacy, and even Kharak Singh, on whom there seemed to be no stigma of illegitimacy, remained only a nincompoop. The Dogra jealousy had always kept him away from the court, and Ranjit Singh though wise enough, was not cautious enough to discern their intriguing attitude. Aurangzeb's attitude of suspicion towards his sons, robbed them of the training in king-craft leading finally to consequences simply catastrophic to the Mughal empire. Ranjit Singh though not of suspicious character, his carelessness in the matter, repeated history in the case of the Sikh empire.

Dictator

Ranjit Singh, though not of autocratic dispositions, yet wielded powers which come only in the train of military dictators. Not unoften was it that his treasuries seemed to have been filled only with the help of his soldiers. Everything was centralised. The Maharaja was the supreme military commander, the supreme executive head and the supreme judge of his State. Rarely was ever an initiative given to an officer in administration or in military ventures. His court, may be with a few honourable exceptions, was a pack of sycophants, who though ambitious, were yet not all round administrative and diplomatic geniuses. And the natural result was, that when the Maharaja died,

Vacancy
everywhere

1. Gough, p. 50.

there was a vacancy everywhere. Soldiers lost their commander and the people their fountain-head of justice and the chief administrator.

And though, the Maharaja recruited men in his services only on merit, and though it goes to his credit that in an age of religious depravity, he cultivated in his court only the sane laws of religious toleration; yet the Sikhs and Hindus on the one side, and Muslims on the other, were people not only of diverse faiths but also of contradictory, traditions, which in that age, placed them only poles asunder. Under the magnetic influence of the Maharaja, they could work together, but after him their harmonious co-operation was as difficult as ever it could be. And this was never foreseen.

Diverse
faiths

Views differ regarding the Maharaja's financial system. "The Maharaja squeezed the last drop of blood out of the peasant's veins," some would say, and although what the Maharaja took with one hand, gave away with the other, and every peasant family having sent a son or two in the Maharaja's army, money flowed back into the villages in the shape of the soldier savings, yet the way they parted with their hard-earned money from the labour consuming lands, was hardly relishing. They tolerated all this because they had seen the worse days, but when they learnt of the better systems of the English, they found it difficult to put up with. The old. The changes introduced by the British, were more scientific and less exacting.

British
system
better

Nor was the custom system of the Maharaja the one worth much appreciation¹. It afforded an encouragement neither to trade nor to industry. Those who studied the free flow of trade in the territories held by the British,

Custom
system

1. See the Chapter of Financial Administration.

disliked, naturally, a system under which scores of custom lines ran irregularly cutting one another at several places and thus making the goods brought from one end of the country to the other, pay customs not only once, twice, or even thrice, but many a time, making the articles of common use thus dearer and more difficult to be consumed by the common man. And then the Maharaja's government was a national government, in which there was no necessity of winning the support of the privileged and moneyed classes, to exploit and control the poor, as the British later did. Maharaja made every attempt to check the rich people from growing rich¹. "These wealthy and incapable men," thus, writes Cunningham, "stood rebuked before the superior genius of Ranjit Singh, and before the mysterious spirit which animated the people arrayed in arms, and they thus fondly hoped that a change would give them all they could desire."

Wealthy people

Army imperfect

Indisciplined Akalis

No subordination

Army panchayats

Nor was the Army Administration such which could have left much undesired. Besides the irregular part of his army, which was too free and indisciplined, the Akalis among whom remained too much undomesticated and had so many times threatened even the Maharaja's own life, the regular part of his army too, was not put under and trained for subordination to the civil officers, with the result that by the time Sher Singh acceded to power, it became simply a self-governing body. "Its affairs" thus writes Payne, "were conducted by panchayats, or councils of "five", representing each company, and elected by the soldiers themselves." The principle of the commonwealth of the Khalsa, which had been introduced by Guru Gobind Singh, and under which the authority of the "five" was stronger than even that of the Guru himself, was too much mis-used. "To these panchayats the men

1. See the Chapter on Civil Adminn; Ranjit Sing 's personal character.

looked for the redress of all their grievances, and to them they made their demands for increased pay, or the dismissal of obnoxious officers. The system originated in the reign of Sher Singh, and so rapidly did the power of the councils grow that they soon acquired the complete control, not only of the army, but of almost every branch of the administration." Civil supremacy in the hands of military personnel, is never an authority well-placed. And it is no wonder that "In those days power was a dangerous possession. Every state official knew that to incur the displeasure of the army was equivalent to signing his own death warrant¹." No sane-minded statesman would dare come forward.

Troops rose in rebellion at Peshawar, Multan, Kashinir and newly conquered state of Mandi, shortly after the Maharaja's death, and when Dhian Singh disbanded some whole regiments, "this only served to increase the general disorder, for the discharged soldiers, scattering over the surrounding districts, threw in their lot with the many robber bands, who, in the absense of any settled government, roamed unchecked over the country side, blackmailing the terrified cultivators, driving off their cattle, and pillaging their farmsteads and villages²."

A wise conqueror as he was, Ranjit Singh failed to "breathe into the hearts of his people any noble sentiment that would have held them together after his death³." No common art was encouraged, no common culture developed. Nor was a common system of education founded. The people combined together only under the dominating authority of Ranjit Singh, and when that unifying centre was no more, the centrifugal forces got

Dangerous

Unemployed
soldiersNo common
Art
No common
Culture

1. Payne, 'Short History of the Sikhs', pp. 151—152; Gordon, p. 124.

2. Payne, pp. 144—145; Gordon, p. 124.

3. Dr. Sinha, N. K., 'Ranjit Singh.'

the best of their chance, and everything scattered away in no time.

Discrimination

Although Ranjit Singh tried to whittle down the possessions of Sardars like Hari Singh Nalwa, by confiscating their jagirs after their death, to the point even of incurring the blame of ingratitude to his servants yet, writes G. L. Chopra, "Ranjit failed to follow consistently the policy of reducing the people of the Punjab to a more or less uniform political level; the most glaring example of such a failure was the grant of an extensive and contiguous territory to a single Dogra family." And it was this Dogra family which was one of the potent causes leading to the destruction of the Sikh power. The Dogra brother Raja Gulab Singh, who later on carved out a separate state for himself in Kashmir, was blamed of having rebelled many a times under Ranjit Singh, but he was always protected by his brother Dhian Singh, who never failed in prevailing upon the Maharaja to take a lenient view of the mis-doings of the in-experienced youth. Here was a generosity ill-placed. Gulab Singh was not an in-experienced man, he was rather making experiments, which led so unfailingly into the creation of a separate Dogra state. Not few of the sincere sardars of the Maharaja's court, were disgusted with this over-patronisation of the Dogras.

Others disgusted

Dhian
Singh's res-
ponsibility

Nor had the intriguers among the Dogra Rajputs failed in bringing harm to the State even during the lifetime of the Maharaja. Had Dhian Singh forwarded the letter of Hari Singh Nalwa to the Maharaja, requesting his soldiers back, whom he had sent for Naunihal Singh's marriage, the life of this ill-fated and hard-pressed, yet so seasoned a general, Nalwa, might have been spared at Peshawer, and he might have been of better service to

the Sikh State in the hour of its peril. Had the Dogras not kept prince Kharak Singh away from the Maharaja's court, on one pretext or the other, the prince, the heir-apparent, might have got a better training in king-craft and saved his life and his empire. Ranjit Singh knew well that the Dogras would not permit his children to rule peacefully after his death. "It was the aim of the Jammu brothers to bring the whole of the Punjab under their dominion, Dhian looking forward to the control of the south, and Gulab that of the north¹." Yet he did nothing to amend the situation.

His ministers were usually his favourites and adventurers. Selection of the Maharaja's officers was done on the basis of their outward merits, and never on the basis of their conviction. It was hardly astonishing, therefore that not a few of them were later on found to be in correspondence with the British, paving the way to latter's supremacy in Punjab.

Once when seeing the map of India, in which all but Punjab had been shown red, the colour of the British empire, Ranjit Singh said: "Sab lal ho jaiga." meaning that the time will come when whole of this map would turn red. Or in other words, he knew that the British were bound to annex the Punjab after his death, and there was bound to be war between the two powers on the score. His mistake was that he postponed this war.

The decline of the Sikh power, according to some writers began when the Maharaja signed the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809. There was no reasonable excuse, according to these writers for his demoralised attitude towards the English after 1823. His diplomatic defeats on the question of Ferozepur, on the question of Shikarpur and on that of the Navigation of the Indus, were simply the signs of his cowardice. That the Sikh forces

Kharak
Singh away

Adventurers

Correspon-
dence with
British

Postponed
inevitable

Decline
began 1809

Ferozepur

1. Payne, p. 137.

were strong enough to fight and defeat the British, only if their ruler had hared to enter the venture, is proved conclusively when, as Payne seems to agree, in the Kabul disaster of the British in the First Anglo-Afghan war, the "British force had suffered defeat at the hands of a foe over whom the troops f the Khalsa had gained more than one decisive victory." Although the Maharaja was living, when the British faced their initial failure in Afghanistan and although he did see his own advantage in their failure, yet he remained unwilling or afraid to withdraw from his engagements¹. He rather, against his own interest; sent his whole army to Peshawer under his grand son, Nau Nihal, to act in concert with Captain Wade, leaving his Sutlej frontier, then occupied by a British division, quite unprotected. He did not only this, but "the whole resources of his country in cattle, grain, etc., were thrown open to the British Government²".

Failed to take opportunities

That if he had dared, he might have won a war against the British may yet further be proved when we learn that the British Governor-General "became nervous, indeed, when pursuing, once at least a bold policy in 1838, the Maharaja sent his army to the bank of the Sutlej to check the British soldiers, in case, on their march to Afghanistan they tried to force their way through the Punjab.

Strong enough

Misfortune

But this boldness of the Maharaja in 1838, was an unfortunate event. The Khalsa army was encouraged, and they developed a confidence in their power. But this they did at a moment, when shortly after, they lost their leader and a sane commander, the Maharaja himself. It was this event which later inspired them cross Sutlej, under the leadership but only of traitors. A suicide, as it proved to be.

1. 'Short History of the Sikhs', 133—134.

2. Calcutta Review August 1844, p. 475.

Bismarck used to say, thus writes Dr. N. K. Sinha, a political alliance between two powers always means one rider and the other a horse. In the case of Anglo-Sikh relations under Ranjit Singh, "the British Government was the rider and Ranjit was the horse." "He never grandly dared He was all hesitancy and indecision." He in fact, had killed the Sikh State before it seemed to have actually died. Clearly thus, the responsibility of the Maharaja in the downfall of his empire was not small.

A horse

But let us not condemn the Maharaja too much on this score, for howsoever imperfect, he was a human-being after all. And as a human-being he was unfortunate too, in the respect that almost all his loyal and brave generals, such as Mohkam Chand, Dewan Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa and Ram Dayal had died before he himself left this mortal world. And none remained behind, except the weaklings and traitors to control the army. And again if the Maharaja failed to establish an efficient and lasting administration, let us not forget that the Maharaja was too busy in the conquest and consolidation of territories to afford much of time for other activities. And then, the Maharaja's time was only the medieval period of the Indian History, and the traditions that he inherited were only Oriental traditions. To compare his administrative works with those of the modern times or with those of his contemporary European monarchs, would simply be an anachronism, and hence an injustice to that great hero of the land of the Five Rivers.

Unfortunate

B—The Dogras.

And there were other causes too leading to the decline of the Sikh power. "Some time previous to his death," thus writes Sir John Gordon, "Ranjit Singh had taken into special favour the family of his minister

Other causes

Eusy
conquests

Dogra

Raja Dhian Singh, a Dogra Rajput, consisting of his son and two brothers, upon all of whom he conferred the title of Raja with princely Jagirs or fields for their maintenance. Poor, but of good family, they entered the Sikh services as troopers; handsome and well mannered, they soon attracted notice by their ability, and rapidly rose to high position, where their influence in public affairs became paramount, but not being Sikhs, they were looked on with great jealousy by the other Sardars. They played a deep game in the intriguing policy of that time, bent on gaining power and wealth, and on becoming independent, a policy which ultimately was successful.

Facts about them

"The Dogra Rajputs, a branch of the old Arya invaders of India, survived the Mohamedan invasions by occupying the hilly country north of the Punjab plains, where they maintained their independence till conquered by Ranjit Singh ...they are strict Hindus, very clannish, loyal to their chiefs, and good soldiers, with all the Rajput pride of ancient lineage, disdaining every service but that of arms!".

King makers

Whereas in the European countries, by this time, to certain extent, better political principles and traditions might have been established, in the oriental traditions, that bane of monarchial government, the king makers, still existed. The decline of all great Muslim dynasties in the Medieval India, and the decline of the Mughal Empire itself had been marked by such self-made and self-seeker parties or juntos of king makers, and the Sikh power in this connection, could be no exception. These Dogra Rajputs, made best use of the opportunity that offered itself due to the weakness of Ranjit Singh's successors. They had already been intriguing for power

1. Gen. Sir John J. H. Gordon, 'The Sikhs', pp. 120-121.

and the Maharaja had already noticed it, but during the life time of the Maharaja, partly due to their respect for him, and partly due to his strength, power and experience, they had never ventured to come out openly, although Gulab Singh did make some minor efforts towards this end. But it was a clear writing on the wall that these Dogra brothers, would make the life of Ranjit Singh's successors difficult.

The moment the Maharaja died, all the modesty and more civilized principles of politics were thrown to the wind, and the Dogras openly came to the forefront to quench their thirst for political power. Raja Hira Singh the son of Raja Dhian Singh, was their candidate for the throne. This small and handsome boy, it may be added for our knowledge, was in the life time of the Maharaja, especially loved by him, for a reason which even Osborne could not understand. The boy had so much an influence upon the Maharaja that he reserved even the privilege of interrupting the Maharaja, which none else—not even his son—could do, while the monarch was busy talking with somebody in his court; and the boy sat on a chair in the court with the Maharaja, while the persons such as Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, who had spent life time in his service, squatted on the floor. No doubt the boy had thus collected considerable amount of influence upon some of the Maharaja's courtiers, on which later, he could bank for the realisation of his and his father's ambition.

After the death of the Maharaja, Raja Dhian Singh brought his son, Kharak Singh to the throne, but seeing him too much inclined towards his favourite Chet Singh, and Dhian Singh himself being an ambitious man, thus writes M'Gregor¹, he murdered Chet Singh and some others in the presence of Kharak Singh. "After this act

Hira Singh

Special
favouriteKharak
Singh to
throneChet Singh
murdered

1. M' Greger, p. 5.

of violence, Kharak Singh shut himself up, and, though he occasionally attended the Durbar, he never forgave the insult. His intellect, never very powerful, became impaired, and the management of public affairs thus fell into the hands of Naunihal Singh.....After a short reign of a little more than twelve months, Kharak Singh died of a broken heart." According to some other writers, however, in conspiracy with his son, Naunihal Singh, Dhian Singh killed Chet Singh and imprisoned Kharak Singh. Kharak Singh was later poisoned, which is confirmed by Smyth, who writes thus : "Kharak Singh was aware that he had been poisoned—at length Kharak Singh died and neither must nor can he made a secret that he died from the slow effects of small doses of Sapheda and Kaskaree."¹ Cunningham also writes, "although his decline was credibly declared to have been hastened by drugs as well as by unfilial harshness, there were none who cared for a ruler so feeble and unworthy."²

Be that as it may, Kharak Siagh died on 5th November 1840, and there was no doubt that this was a result of the Dogra conspiracy.

Capt. Wade was said to have been another hindrance in the way of the Dogras. Firstly because, as according to Cunningham, he had refused to make Dhian Singh the medium of communication with Ranjit Singh, when the latter was living. And secondly that he accused Naunihal Singh, the heir—apparent, of machination with the Afghan chiefs. Raja Dhian Singh got Capt. Wade transferred, and in his place now, Mr. Clerk was appointed on 1st April 1840, as the British agent in the Punjab.

Kharak
Singh
removed

Died in 1840

Wade
transferred

1. History of the Reigning Family of Lahore.

2. History of the Sikhs, p. 208. Gordon and Latif, however, write that rumours were set afloat that Kharak Singh wanted to surrender Punjab to the British. He was therefore deposed and his son brought to power. The former died after some time of his deposition.

For a greater portion of the period of Kharak Singh's reign in the Punjab, it was his son Naunihal Singh, who in reality administered the State affairs. During this period, writes Cunningham, he proved to be a competent and an efficient ruler, and there was every possibility that given an opportunity, he would succeed in arresting the violent decline in the Sikh power. But the king makers, the Dogra Rajputs, were perhaps determined not to see him a success. He was returning from the last ceremonies connected with the death of his father, when a structure of the fort fell upon him. Cunningham writes that, as a result of this the young Maharaja became senseless and died during the night. According to M'Gregor¹, he died at the spot, but it was given out that he had been seriously injured. His dead body was carried into the palace, where the next morning he was declared to have died. There was no doubt, however that the Dogras were the culpable homicides If the structure of the fort fell upon Naunihal Singh, it had already been so planned to fall, and one view goes so far as to say that, the young Maharaja was only seriously injured, and after medical treatment, he was declared to be out of danger, but fearing a retribution from him, the Dogras got him murdered during the night.

After this, Mai Chand Kaur, the mother of Naunihal Singh was brought to the throne. She was expecting a posthumous son to Naunihal Singh but as its sex could not be known, the Dogras openly came forth with their plans and suggested that Raja Hira Singh could be adopted by the Mai as her son. The Mai however refused this. Later on she was suggested a '*Chaddar Dalna*' of Naunihal Singh's wife with Hira Singh. But this proposal too having been refused, they now began to plan to do

Naunihal
Singh
competent

But killed

Mai Chand
Kaur

1. M' Gregor, p. 6

Beaten to death

a short work of this lady as well. They conspired with Raja Sher Singh, whose claims to the throne were only doubtful,¹ and as according to Clerk, in the month of June 1842, they beat the lady to death².

Sher Singh

Sher Singh came to power, and for sometime he worked with the consent of the Dogras. But he had the painful story of a chain of the recent barbarous treacheries of his Prime Minister Dhian Singh before him, and he had no confidence that they would not be perpetrated against him. Securing therefore the help of Ajit Singh Sandhanwalia, he got the Raja murdered.

Dhian Singh murdered

and Sher Singh

Hira Singh

Dalip Singh to throne

But Ajit Singh who thus murdered Raja Dhian Singh, did not do so for the sake of Sher Singh. He had his own ambitions, and shortly after, getting Sher Singh too murdered, he got himself at the helm of affairs³. The Sandhanwalia Sardar, too, however, was not destined to enjoy the power for a long time. Soon after, when the Dogra chief Hira Singh, learnt of all these developments at Lahore, he appealed to the army and winning over the support of some Sikh forces, invaded Lahore, caught hold of Sandhanwalia and put him immediately to death.

After this, Hira Singh brought Dalip Singh to the throne. Although he failed in becoming a king the himself, he was declared to be The Prime Minister of State. Dalip Singh too, however, could not rule for a long time. The Dogras such as Gulab Singh, as it will be discussed later, were aspiring to carve out with the help of the British, separate states of their own. And this was possible only if there were a clash between Sikhs and the British.

Thus writes Gordon: "The chief Sardars had gained affluence and lost moral force; the army was venal; and

1. As he was not considered to have been the real son of Ranjit Singh.

2. Clerk, to Govt. 15th June, 1842.

3. According to Cunningham, however, Sandhanwalia first murdered Sher Singhs with Dhian Singh's help and later killed Dhian Singh himself. Both were killed on 15th Sept. 1843 Gordon also holds a similar view, pp. 125—126.

the arrogant punches, the military councils,..... clashed itself against the British ranks in fierce but unavailing efforts to overcome¹."

C—The British Conspiracies.

And then, the British did not play an insignificant part in enhancing the speed with which the Sikh glory wanned, and it were they who gave the coup de grace to it. The East India Company had swallowed many camels, thus writes Dr. N. K. Sinha, and the Punjab was only a mosquito. And then, he continues, as in Rome, the central power once dominant, could only grow and all the outside forces could only shutter—theirelves against it.²

Determined
to annex

The British never cared to abide strictly by the terms of their friendship with the Maharaja. Thus writes Dr. Ganda Singh: "To them friendship was only a matter of expediency. Like all political opportunists, they were friends as long as it suited them. While they were engaged in consolidating their power in Hindustan, they kept up the show of friendship and showed all courtesy and kindness to Ranjit Singh. But no sooner did they find themselves in about 1827 to be absolutely secure in their possessions as undisputed masters of the country, with their rights none to dispute and their might none to oppose, then they turned their attention to the north beyond the Sutlej, may, even beyond the Indus³".

The disputes between the English and Ranjit Singh on the territories of Wadni, Ferozepur and other small territories on the cis-Sutlej regions, have already been discussed; and they prove how as the time passed the British aggressive attitude towards Ranjit Singh was developing. The political game which the British played against the Maharaja in Sind, had disturbed the otherwise

Aggressive

1. Gordon, (1904), p. 134.

2. See his 'Ranjit Singh', pp. 189—192.

3. The British Occupation of the Pnnjab, (1955), p. 17.

peaceful sleep of the lion of the Punjab, not once. And it was no mere incidence that Ranjit Singh had uttered those of ten quoted words "sab lal ho jai ga," regarding the map of the Punjab.

The case of Sayyad Ahmad of Bareilly, who raised a standard of Jehad against the Sikh rule on December 21, 1826; and who at one stage was even successful in capturing the city of Peshawar, but was later killed in the battle of Bala Kot on May 8, 1831, has already been discussed. According to Sir Charles Aitchison, he had "agencies in different parts of India for the levy of money and supply of arms.....the imperial palace at Delhi, the minor Mohammadan princes and the great cities of Lucknow and Hyderabad supplied him with funds¹." Further we learn on the authority of Mirza Hairat Dehlvi, in his book *Hayat-i-Taiyaba*, that when the Sayyad informed the Lieutenant—Governor of the North Western Provinces (now U. P.), through Sheikh Ghulam Ali Rais of Allahabad, regarding his intentions to prepare for the Jehad within the British territories, the Lieutenant—Governor replied that he had no objection to such preparations, nor did he have to say anything in the matter, so long as the peace of the British territories was not disturbed. On the one hand, while it may not prove as some writers would like to deduce, that the British had an active connivance in the matter, yet we can not help concluding that the British had no scruple against their own subject trying to violate the territory of a monarch with whom they professed to be on the "most cordial and friendly relations."

1. See his 'Lord Lawrence', pp. 9–10

On March 4, 1838, on the occasion of the celebration of his grand son, Kanwar Naunihal Singh's marriage, the Maharaja had invited Sir Henry Fane, the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces to attend. But that English gentleman, did not fail to abuse the hospitality of the host, as he was expected to do by the British authorities. Instead of appreciating the welcome accorded to him, he lost no time in trying to observe the military means and the soldierly qualities of the Maharaja's forces; and it was during this visit that, as according to Cunningham, a correct estimate was drawn by him, "of the force which would be required for the complete subjugation of the Punjab¹."

They abused hospitality

This shows clearly, what was the mental attitude of the British towards the Punjab. They were in fact bidding only for time, and there was no doubt that the moment the great Maharaja closed his eyes, they would pull this ripe fruit down into their lap. They took every opportunity to conspire with the Punjab traders against the Sikh rule, and after the death of the Maharaja, whenever a British officer visited the Punjab, with one pretext or the other, he was never careless in instigating the Punjab masses against the Sikh Raj.

Instigated the masses

The Punjab was annexed by the British in 1849, but the records show that they had plans for this up their sleeves much earlier. As early as May 26, 1841, when the British were busy in Afghanistan, Mrs. Henry Lawrence had written to Mrs. Cameron from Subathoo² that:

"Wars, and rumours of wars, are on every side and there seems no doubt that next cold weather will

Their plans

1. "History of the Sikhs", p. 227

2. Edwardes and Merivale, 'Henry Lawrence', i, pp. 216-17
Quoted from Dr. Ganda Singh, in his "The British Occupation of the Punjab", pp. 31-32.

decide the long suspended question of occupying the Punjab. Henry, both in his Civil and Military capacity, will probably be called to take part in whatever goes on."

And again on June 5, she wrote:

"Nothing is yet promulgated; but Henry supposes the army for the Punjab will be divided into three columns the main body accompanied by Mr. Clerk, our chief, and the others by H. and Mr. Cunningham, an officer of Engineers now acting at Ferozepur"

In October 1841, thus writes John Ludlow, "The British Agent on the Sutlej had proposed to march on Lahore with 12,000 men to restore order. The Calcutta papers teemed with plans for conquering the Punjab¹." The attempts to occupy Punjab under the pretext of restoring peace and order, should indeed have been made in that very year, but for the Afghan catastrophe, which blew up the British plans.

Proposal to
march on
Lahore

Seduction
Punjab
officers.

And then the shameless way, the British tried to seduce some of the Punjab officers, was no less a cause for divisions and disaffections in the Punjab. Major-General Sir Herbert Edwards gives an interesting account, as to how it occurred to Henry Lawrence in 1842, that "a consideration should be offered to the Rajas Dhian Singh and Gulab Singh, for their assistance, they alone in the Punjab being now able to give aid." "The Rajas, secured in their territory, even with additions, General Avitable guaranteed our aid in retiring with his property, and any other sirdars aiding us cordially be specially and separately treated for;" said Henry Lawrence. And finally towards the end of January, 1842, he openly proposed "that on the terms of efficient support we assist Raja Gulab Singh to get possession of the valley of

1. 'British India', ii, p. 141.

Jallalabad and endeavour to make some arrangement to secure it and Peshawar to his family¹."

How treacherously, the British influence led the Sardars Lal Singh and Tej Singh betray the cause of the Punjab later in 1845-46, is well known to every student of the Punjab History. Lal Singh, thus writes Cunningham, deserted Sikh army "when the artillery ammunition of the English had failed, when a portion of their force was retiring upon Ferozepur, and when no exertion could have prevented the invaders from retreating likewise, if the Sikhs had boldly pressed forward."

Lal Singh
and Tej
Singh
betrayed

The British had for long been looking for a disturbance in the Punjab, and for a war with the Sikhs. That was their cherished desire, if they wanted a good pretext for the annexation of that country and when Diwan of Multan revolted against the Lahore Darbar, which was then under the protection of the British, instead of suppressing this revolt, they gave every opportunity to it to spread. And when it did spread, they welcomed it, as Dalhousie wrote to the Home Government: "The rebellion of Raja Sher Singh followed by his army, the rebellion of Sardar Chattar Singh with the Darbar army under his command, the state of the troops and of the Sikh population everywhere, have brought matters to that crisis I have for months been looking for; and we are now not on the eve, but in the midst of war with the Sikh nation and the kingdom of the Punjab."

Revolt of
Mulraj

When a tributary of the Lahore Darbar, Dewan Mul Raj, revolted against the lawful Government and the rightful ruler of Lahore, which was under the British protection, with a queer logic, the revolt was considered to be a revolt of the Punjab Government itself against the British. And thus, it is not strange that when Lord Gough, the Commander in-chief of the British forces was

An excuse

Gough's
dilemma

1. See H. Edwards, Biography of H. Lawrence, pp. 324—328.

ordered for a fight, for a considerable time he could not understand whether that fight was to be fought to suppress the revolt of Dewan Mul Raj, or to dethrone Maharaja Dalip Singh and annex the State of the Punjab. This conscientious officer did not make a secret of his feelings, when in the midst of the war, he wrote "war was to be against and not in support of the Darbar, I do not know whether we are at peace or war, or who it is we are fighting for."

The British intention for a long time had simply been to extend the limits of the Indian empire to its natural frontier in the North West; and there is no doubt, in this they ultimately did succeed, when in 1849 they so crookedly annexed the Land of the Five Rivers. The part they played in the decline of the Sikh power was thus quite considerable.

Crooked
action

CHAPTER XIV

The First Anglo-Sikh War

A—Its causes

It was hardly seven years after the death of the lion of the Punjab, that a major clash between British and the Sikhs came. The Sikh soldiers crossed the river Sutlej on 12th December, and on 13th December, 1845, the Governor-General issued his historic proclamation asserting among other things that:

Governor-General's proclamation,

1. 'The British Government has ever been on terms of friendship with that of the Punjab, and that the conditions of the Treaty of 1809 have always been faithfully observed' by them.

2. 'Friendly relations have been maintained with the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh by the British Government up to the present time,' and that British took 'precautionary measures for the protection of the British frontier,' their nature and cause being fully explained before-hand to the Lahore Darbar.

3. There have been many most unfriendly proceedings on the part of the Darbar,' but 'utmost forbearance was shown by the Governor-General. Because the Governor-General always desired to see a strong Sikh Government established in the Punjab.

Blames Sikhs

4. The Sikh army marched from Lahore by the orders of the Darbar to invade the British territory, and no reply was given to the British, for their demand of explanation.

5. 'The Sikh army has now, without a shadow of provocation, invaded the British territories.'

Declares War

The proclamation declared war on the Sikhs and confiscated and annexed to the British territories all the long coveted possessions of the Maharaja on the left bank of the Sutlej.

This proclamation thus squarely lays down the responsibility for the first Anglo-Sikh war on the Lahore Darbar who ordered their forces to cross the river Sutlej, and thus invited a trouble with the British.

Different views, however, have been expressed by different writers, as to who primarily should have been the cause of this war. The writers such as Latif, support the British position. He thus writes: "During the whole time (after the death of Maharaja Kanjit Singh) the tumult and confusion were reigning in the Punjab, the attitude assumed by the British Government was pacific and forbearing..... As early as June 1845, the Governor-General, Sir Henry Hardinge, expressed his determination to maintain a Sikh Government in the Punjab as long as possible; this declaration of policy being repeated in September and again in the early part of October. Provocation was repeatedly given, but it was invariably answered, not by arms, but by friendly advice, or timely warning in the plainest terms, the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief (Sir Hugh Gough) maintaining the opinion, even up to the 14th of December, that the Sikhs would not cross the Sutlej¹."

But writes George Campbell; "The immediate collision was however, I think hastened by imprudence on the part of British Frontier Agent, Major Broadfoot. I know of some things done by him which it would be difficult to defend."

Blaming
Sikhs

British
supported

Campbell
condemns

1. Latif, Vol. II., p. 539.

And again : "It is recorded in the annals of history, or what is called history, which will go down to posterity, that the Sikh army invaded British territory in pursuance of a determination to attack us. And most people will be very much surprised to hear that they did nothing of the kind. They made no attack on our outlying cantonments, nor set foot in our territory. What they did was to cross the river and to entrench themselves in their own territory."

And writes G. Carmichael Smyth : "Regarding the Punjab war; I am neither of the opinion that the Seikhs made an unprovoked attack, nor that we have acted towards them with great forbearance.... besides the Seikhs had translations of Sir Charles Napier's speech stating that we were going to war with them; and as all European powers would have done under the circumstances, the Seikhs thought it as well to be first in the field. Moreover they were not encamped in our territory, but their own.

And again he writes : "The year before the war broke out, we kept the island between Ferozepore and the Punjab, though it belonged to the Seikhs, owing to the deep water being between us and the island." And if "the treaty of 1809 is said to have been binding between the two Governments, then the simple question is, who first departed from the rules of friendship ? I am decidedly of the opinion that we did."

India, there is no doubt, as Cunningham writes "from Kabul to the valley of Assam and island of Ceylon is regarded as one country and the dominion in it is associated in the minds of the people with the predominance of one monarch or of one race." and there was a general

Carmichael
Smyth

Napier's
speech

Island kept

General
Psychology

1. *Reigning Family of Lahore*, pp. XX—XXIII.

psychology among people, whether in Punjab or in the rest of India, that one day or the other, the Punjab had to be annexed by the British; yet to deny the fact that the British had an actively aggressive attitude towards the Sikhs, and that they had decided to annex the Punjab, long before actually it was annexed, is just to do the impossible.

British
aggressive

Right from
1809

I—The British Aggressive Policy

The British aggressive policy had indeed been felt by the Sikhs even during the time of Ranjit Singh. The Amritsar Treaty of 1809 was always considered as an instance of Ranjit Singh's weakness. The quarrel on Wadni, in 1823, the occupation of Ferozepur by the British in 1835 and the British show of force for the withdrawal of the Sikh forces from Shikarpur in 1836, were all instances to show that the British were bent upon creating trouble. And as early as 1838, when Osborne visited the great Maharaja, he had remarked in his diary that immediately after the death of Ranjit Singh, the first English step should be to send a huge force and occupy the Punjab.

The British Preparations

The war preparations which the British were making, and which they intensified after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, could not pass unnoticed by the Sikhs. The British excuse for doing so, that when the Sikh army became predominant in the State, the 'machinery of Government would break down and the bands of plunderers would everywhere arise, creating trouble at the border, was accepted by none in Punjab. And the more the preparations they made, the more the Sikhs felt their aggressive pressure.

The pressure

After the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809, the English Viceroy had proposed the withdrawal of the detachment of the British troops advanced to Ludhiana, to avoid irritating Ranjit Singh. Although the proposal was not

finally carried, yet upto 1838 "the garrison of Ludhiana formed the only body of armed men near the Sikh frontier except the provincial regiment raised at Sabathu for the police of the hills after the Gurkha war," Yet in 1835, Ferozepur was occupied by the British, with the express idea that from that place, it was easier to March to Lahore than from Ludhiana. In 1838, some soldiers were actually posted at that place and the succeeding warfare in Afghanistan and in Sind later, confirmed this place as a permanent cantonment. From now onwards, a steady increase took place in the number of the British forces on this frontier. And in 1842, using the argument of the remoteness from support of the two posts on Sutlej, a considerable body of troops was advanced to Ambala as a reserve.

Cantonment
at FerozepurTroops at
Ambala

Upto 1838, the British frontier troops were one regiment at Sabathu and two at Ludhiana, with six pieces of artillery, the total number of men being a little over 2,500. Auckland raised this total to about 8,000, by adding to Ludhiana and creating a new contonment at Ferozepur. Ellenborough created new stations at Ambala, Kasauli and Simla and raised the total thus to 14,000, with field guns numbering 48. Lord Harding raised the total yet further to 32,000 men and 68 field guns, besides 10,000 of men with artillery at Meerut.

Auckland

Ellenboroug

Hardinge

More aggressive part in this connection was played by Sir Henry Hardinge. "He landed in India in July, 1844. On 23rd August of that year he addressed the Commander-in-Chief on the distribution of the force in Bengal. On the 8th September, five Native regiments were placed at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief for distribution between Meerut and the frontier. On the 11th of the same month, confidential orders were sent for the construction of two barracks at Ferozepur, to accommodate

Hardinge
more
aggressive

a regiment of European infantry and two batteries of artillery. The two European regiments at Sabathu and Kasauli were also added to the garrison. In January, 1845, the Bombay Government was requested to send up H. M.'s 14th Light Dragoon to the frontier, and batteries in the Sirhind Division were raised from 90 to 130 horses. As a result of these measures, the British force at and above Ambala was augmented from 13,600 men and 48 guns in January, 1844, to 32,500 men and 68 guns in December, 1845; while total force at and above Meerut including Delhi and the Hill stations, which had been, only 24,000 men and 66 guns, now amounted to 45,500 men and 98 guns.¹"

A fort

During an interview with Raja Hira Singh, on 1st January 1844, an Akali exclaimed that a fort was being built by the English at Ferozepur. On 8th February, however, the information reached the Darbar from Rai Kishan Chand, the Vakil at Ludhiana, that no fort was being built, though a magazine was under construction. The same day another information reached that about 20 guns and an immense quantities of ammunition were collected at the place. On 17th May, 1844, it was reported that the English were buying large quantities of grain to be stored at Ferozepur. And on June 1, reached a report that "the English commandant at Ferozepur had directed the zamindars not to sow any land for an autumn crop as a very large army was to be assembled after the rains.²"

Grain

Sikh
attitude

Though the Sikhs did not deny the British the right for defence, thus writes Cunningham, "but that any danger was to be apprehended from Lahore was not admitted by men conscious of their weakness.³"

1. 'Viscount Hardinge,' 76—?

2. Abstracts from Intelligence from Punjab.

3. See also Gough, p. 58; Payne, p. 167.

The Afghan affairs

And again, the Tripartite Treaty, as discussed in the chapter on the Anglo-Sikh relations, had been signed on June 26 1838, between the British Shah Shuja and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It was clearly indicated in this treaty that Peshawar would be confirmed on Ranjit Singh. The policy of friendship towards the British, thus decided upon by Ranjit Singh, was carried on by Maharaja Kharak Singh, even to a greater extent, so much so that where as Maharaja Ranjit Singh had not for obvious reasons, permitted the passage of the main British army of invasion through his territories to Afghanistan, his son granted the permission at the time of their return. The courtiers of the Maharaja did not like this, and in October, 1839, they represented to him, "that the passage of the British troops through the Punjab would be very expensive to the State, but the Maharaja said that the alliance between the two Governments admitted of such expenses."¹

Sikh
friendship

But instead of being grateful to the Sikhs for this act, the British did not fail in intriguing against the Sikhs and the ink on the Tripartite Treaty had not yet dried, when they came to a secret understanding with Shah Shujah, through their agent Macnaughton, that he would be given Peshawar when Ranjit Singh's line was held to end with his grand son, Prince Nau Nihal Singh's death. Though the Sikhs were not made known of this scheme, yet, writes Cunningham, "it would be idle to suppose the Lahore Government ignorant of a scheme which was discussed in official correspondence."

British
intrigued

The British attempts upon Afghanistan, however, failed, when on 23rd December, 1841, after two years of the British occupation, their envoy in Kabul was

1. See *The Punjab in 1839-40*, Edited by Dr. Ganda Singh,

pp. 145-301.

2. *History of the Sikhs*, p. 251.

Sikhs
fulfilled
promises.

murdered. A British Army of Revenge was then marched upon Afghanistan under the command of General Pollock and where as under the terms of the treaty, "the Sikhs were only bound to employ a contingent of 6,000 men," thus wrote Henry Lawrence to Mr. J. C. Marshman in April, 1842, "they did the work with not less than 15,000, leaving the stipulated number in position, and withdrawing the rest to Jamrood and Peshawar, where they remained ready to support those in the pass, if necessary."¹ And regarding the account the Sikh forces gave of themselves, thus wrote Lord Ellenborough, the Governor-General, in his notification of April 19:

Governor-
General
satisfied,

"The Governor-General deems it to be due to the troops of the Maharaja Sher Singh to express his entire satisfaction with their conduct as reported to him and to inform the army that the loss sustained by the Sikhs in the assault of the Pass which was forced by them is understood to have been equal to that sustained by the troops of Her Majesty and of the Government of India. The Governor-General has instructed his agent at the court of Maharaja to offer his congratulations on this occasion, so honourable to the Sikh arms."

To Queen

And again, writing to the Queen of England on 21st April, he said: "The Sikh army co-operated with that of India by a second pass leading to Ali Masjid, and there is no reason to doubt the good faith of the Sikh Government."² And later on General Pollock himself wrote that "the Lahore contingent under the able direction of Captain Lawrence has invariably given the most cheerful assistance, dragging the guns, occupying the heights and covering the rearguard".³

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1. Edwards and Merivale, *The Life of Henry Lawrence*, i, p. 363
 2. 'Private Correspondence relating to the Anglo-Sikh Wars'. Appendix A, 7, p. 445
 3. Edwards and Merivale, *Life of Henry Lawrence*, i, p. 407

Yet a reserve

Yet, when the Sikh army was giving so handsome an account of themselves, in the fulfilment of the friendly agreement, the British were assembling a third army of "reserve at Ferozepur on the frontier of the Punjab to keep the Sikhs in check." It is difficult indeed to understand, as to what did the British want the Sikhs to check from.

In fact Lord Ellenborough himself had written to the home authorities on September 30, 1843: "There does not seem to be any feeling against us (in the Punjab). They are only quarreling amongst themselves apparently; nor do I see the least show of hostility to us anywhere." By this time the murder of Sher Singh had already taken place, and even after his murder "no indication has been given," again wrote the Governor-General to the Duke of Wellington on November 20, 1843, "of the least desire to provoke the resentment of the British Government." He wrote to the Duke on July 2, 1844: "In the Punjab there is more of pacific appearance than at any time since the murder of Sher Singh."

No indication

British intrigues to seduce Punjab Officers.

Maharaja Sher Singh was extending his helping hand in the Afghan affairs to the British. But instead of being grateful to him, the self interested British began to seduce the Maharaja's chiefs against himself. Raja Gulab Singh thus was sent by the Maharaja to help the British army which was proceeding towards Afghanistan. And when Gulab Singh met Henry Lawrence in this connection in January 1842, it occurred to him that "a consideration should be offered to the Rajas Dhian Singh and Gulab Singh, for their assistance, they alone in the Punjab being now able to give aid"¹ and again, as Lawrence himself said: "we need such men as the Raja

Seduction of
Gulab
Singh, Dhian
Singh

I. See Biography of Henry Lawrence, by Major-General Herbert Edwards.

Avitable

and General Avitable, and should bind them to us by the only tie they recognise-self-interest." And as he proposed on January 29, 1842, "on the terms of efficient support we assist Raja Gulab Singh to get possession of the valley of Jallalabad and endeavour to make some arrangement to secure it and Peshawar to his family."¹

This is how the British played a treacherous part against their honest ally Sher Singh. They thus were able to seduce not only Gulab Singh, but Sardar Tej Singh and Sardar Lal Singh, the Poorbia soldiers of fortune, of Rohtas, as well.

And of
Ventura

And again, General Ventura, who had been in the service of the Lahore Darbar, and who had gone on leave to Europe, on his return from leave, was made an easy tool by the British hands to realise their ambition in the Punjab. Thus did the Duke of Wellington address Lord Ellenborough on February 4, 1843, "An Italian Officer, who was here before in the service of Buonaparte and has since been in the service of Runjit Singh, but had returned to Europe, has within the last three months taken leave of Louis Philippe previous to his return to Lahore. "His course should be observed."

Secret agent

It was not long before Lord Ellenborough understood the exact meaning of the words "His course should be observed." The General was contacted immediately after his return from Europe and the Governor-General was able to convert him into his secret agent.

The Sand-
hanwalias

In January 1841, the Sandhanwalia Sardars, Ajit Singh and his uncle Atar Singh, immediately after Sher Singh had come to the throne, fled to the British territory. On the intervention of Mr. George Russel Clerk, the British Political Agent at Ludhiana, the Sandhanwalia Sardars were permitted by the Maharaja in early

1. See 'Biography of H. Lawrence', pp. 326-7.

May, 1843, to return to the Punjab and their property and jagirs were restored to them. Besides, Kehar Singh Sandhanwalia, the son of Atar Singh and Lehna Singh Sandhanwalia too were released from jail by the Maharaja and set at liberty. It was these Sandhanwalia Sardars who murdered Maharaja Sher Singh, his son Prince Partap Singh and the Prime Minister Raja Dhian Singh.

Commenting upon this incidence, wrote 'British Friend of India' of London, in its issue of December 1843 "We have no proof that company instigated all the King-killing which has been perpetrated in the Punjab...we must say we smell a rat."

The smell of a rat is confirmed further. The catastrophe took place on September 15, 1843, and on September 12, 1843, Lord Ellenborough wrote to the Duke of Wellington: "The affairs of the Punjab will probably receive their denouement from the death of Sher Singh," and again on September 20, when the catastrophe had taken place, he wrote that the Maharaja of Lahore was "pulling his house down upon his head. The catastrophe was nearly taking place three weeks ago..."

It clearly shows that the British authorities were fully in the know of the Sandhanwalia conspiracy for the Maharaja's murder. In fact the Sandhanwalias had been an easy prey to intrigues of the British, since their restoration to their jagirs and property by the Maharaja, who was supposed to be a friend of the British and who restored the Sandhanwalias at their request.

The British Provocation.

The British in fact had been planning to attack the Punjab much before the war actually began. It was as early as on October 22, 1841, that Lord Ellenbrough wrote to the Duke of Wellington: "At present about 12,000 men are collected near Ferozepur to watch the Sikhs, and act if necessary.

Smell a rat

British knew

of
Sandhanwa-
lia conspi-
racy

Plans for conquest

"What I desired, therefore, was your opinion, founded as far as it could be upon imperfect geographical information which could be given to you, as to best mode of attacking the Punjab."

And again at about the same time, writes John Ludlow, "The British agent on the Sutlej had proposed to march on Lahore with 12,000 men to restore order. The Calcutta papers teemed with plans for conquering the Punjab." And even Henry Lawrence, who was then on sick leave at Sabathu, offered in a letter to the British agent, Mr. Clerk, dated October 29, 1841, his services in case of an operation in the Punjab.

Plan to occupy Peshawar

In a letter to Lord Fitzgerald on April 6, 1842, when the Sikhs were rendering every possible aid to the hard-pressed British in Afghanistan, thus wrote the Duke of Wellington: "I am glad to see such good account of the Sikh Government...But this I may say, if we are to maintain our position in Afghanistan, we ought to have Peshawar, the Khyber Pass, Jallalabad and the passes between that post and Kabul."

Place Sikhs under subjection

And again when the British forces themselves wanted Jallalabad, Ellenborough encouraged the Lahore Darbar to occupy it. The purpose for this proposal was, as he himself wrote: "We shall have placed an irreconcilable enemy to the Afghans between them and us, and hold that enemy to the Afghans, occupied as he must be in defending himself against them, in entire subjection to us by our position upon Sutlej, within a few miles of Amritsar and Lahore."

Aggressive

These two cases clearly show the British attitude towards the friendly power, which had played such an important part in winning them a victory in Afghanistan. More so in the case of Peshawar. Peshawar belonged to the Sikhs, and if the British wanted to secure it from them, it could not be done without a war.

The case of Kaithal.

Another provocation was given to the Sikhs. Thirty eight miles West of Karnal, Bhai Udai Singh, the ruler of the Sikh State of Kaithal, died on March 15, 1843, without leaving a male heir. According to Hindu law, an issueless chief or his widow was perfectly within his or her right, if he or she adopted a son. According to the Sikh custom, a widow too could succeed her husband, as Mai Chand Kaur of Lahore had done after the death of her son Nau Nihal Singh in her own name and right. Moreover, the State of Kaithal had not been held by its chief originally as a grant from the British Government. Yet, when Udai Singh died, his State was occupied by the British as a lapsed State. This could not have failed in alienating the minds of the Sikhs against the English.

Case of Kapuru.

Kapuru, the manager of Saraj, a parganal of Kulu Hills, revolted against the Sikh Government. An expedition was sent against him and he fled across the Sutlej to Shangir, a tract of Kulu itself and later on surrendered Sihoti, a village lying within this territory to the British. The Lahore Government naturally objected against it, because the village was a part of Kulu, which was owned by the Darbar.

Surrendered
Sikh
territories

Another dispute occurred. Dhanna Singh, a native of the village Mauran, situated in Nabha State, was in service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who being pleased with him, wrote to Jaswant Singh, the Raja of Nabha, to grant him the village Mauran as Jagir, in return the Maharaja himself conferring a number of villages for life, on Jaswant Singh's sister. After the death of Dhanna Singh, his son, Hukam Singh, succeeded him in 1843. But Devindar Singh, the new ruler of Nabha, procuring an authority from Sir

Village of
Mauran

George Clerk, Agent to the Governor-General on North-Western Frontier, on the strength of a fabricated letter supposed to have been written by Maharaja Kharak Singh, authorising him to resume the village, marched his troops upon the village in August 1843, seized Hukum Singh's property worth about two lakhs and occupied the village. The letter which was supposed to have been written by Maharaja Kharak Singh, bore neither his signature nor his seal. The Lahore Darbar demanded the restoration of the village, but the British Government replied that "a dependent State had no power to transfer to an independent one without the consent of the paramount power." So jaswant Singh's grant to Dhanna Singh had been illegal, and the claim of the Lahore Darbar invalid.

The Treasure of Raja Suchet Singh.

This was another cause of bitterness between the two governments. "The Rajas of Jummu have always sought to acquire wealth by trade as well as by war and policy and they have had a house in Ferozepur for some years past, for the transaction of their business in salt chiefly of several mines concerning which Raja Gulab Singh holds the contract from the Lahore Government¹." During the first Afghan war, as Kanehya Lal writes, when the British Government wanted to float some loan, Raja Suchet Singh sent a good quantity of gold and cash to his house at Ferozepur for a dual purpose, to secure it outside the country and with it to win English sympathy. But the money having reached there late, when the British required it no more, the Raja got about fifteen lakhs of rupees buried in his house at Ferozepur. He divulged this secret to Hira Singh at the time of his death. Hira Singh in a letter to Richmond, claimed:

Occupied

Restoration
demanded

Darbar
demanded
treasure

1. P.G.R.O. 149/50, Richmond to Currie, 7th April, 1844.

"1st—that the Government of the Punjab is de-facto Government ruling over a numerous people judging between man and man."

The arguments

"2nd—that it is the only true interpreter of its own laws, and that it can best decide to whom the treasure deposited by its subjects in Ferozepur belongs.

"3rd—that the treasure in question is not claimed by any subject or dependent of the British Government, and that consequently it must belong wholly to subjects or dependents of the Lahore Government, which can best determine the right of the claimants."

"4.....that the two Governments have no concern whatever whith the subjects of one another, and that the rights of the subjects of each are to be obtained only through the respective Governments."¹

Receiving no satisfactory reply, Maharaja Dalip Singh wrote personally on the subject to the Governor-General in July 1844. Currie directed Richmond on August 10, 1844, to address the Lahore Darbar as "... the Governor-General is willing to meet the wishes of the Maharaja, if His Highness will state that the heirs of the late Raja Suchet Singh are not willing to prefer their claim to this property, but are willing that it shall be relinquished to the Lahore Government with a view to just disposal according to the law and usage of their country; and the Governor-General.....on receiving this distinct assuarance, will cause the treasure to be delivered to the persons authorised by His Highness to receive it."²

Dalip Singh
wrote

British
action

Gulab Singh, and the widow of Suchet Singh who had adopted as her son, Ranbir Singh nicknamed Mian Phina, a son of Gulab Singh, were asked by Richmond to express

1. P.G.R.O, 159/64, Richmond to Currie, 27th May, 1844.

2. P.G.R.O., 134/51, Currie to Richmond, 10th August 1844.

their opinion. While Gulab Singh did not express his view clearly, the widow of Suchet Singh refused in her reply, that the treasure could be given up without her consent or that of her son. Richmond informed the Darbar of it in October forwarding "the legal obligations by which the British Government is bound only to transfer the property with the consent of the parties to whom it belongs¹".

This, however, could not satisfy the Darbar, who considered Raja Suchet Singh as a rebel and whose property therefore, could be confiscated. Ironically enough, after the First Sikh War, this money was adjusted by the British Government as a part payment of the price of Kashmir, which was sold to him².

They prepared Boats.

In 1844 and 1845; though not communicated to, the Sikhs knew well that the British were preparing some boats at Bombay to make bridges across Sutlej to "convey troops up and down, and save us an enormous charge on the Sutlej," as Lord Ellenborough wrote to the Duke of Wellington on May 9, 1844. When the Sikhs expressed a doubt and apprehension regarding this act of the British, the pretext forwarded was that the purpose of constructing their boats was to facilitate trade in the Indus and the Sutlej. But these arguments could hardly convince the Sikhs, who by this time had known the British character thoroughly well.

The establishment at Basian near Raikot, of a grand supply depot, showed how the British were preparing. And again, the collection of ordnance and ammunition at

Not satisfactory

To convey troops

Supply depot

1. P.C.G.O. 134/58, Currie to Richmond, 25th September, 1844.
 2. See Kanheya Lal, p. 410.

Sakkar in Sind, to equip a force of 5,000, to march towards Multan, was a subject of ordinary official correspondence. And although, Charles Napier, the Sind Governor, expressed complete ignorance about this correspondence among his subordinates, when enquired about by Cunningham; it is difficult to imagine that such activities should not have come to the notice of the Lahore Sardars and caused thereby a provocation in their minds. Nor were the Sikhs ignorant of the character of Charles Napier himself, who had just recently conquered and annexed Sind, and that too so treacherously and shamelessly.

Ammuni.
tion for
march

Napier's
Character

"The Sikhs," writes Cunningham, "thus considered that the fixed policy of the English was territorial aggrandizement¹" and this belief strengthened in their mind yet further when "in the summer of 1845 some horsemen from Multan crossed a few miles into Sindh territory in pursuit of certain marauders. The boundary of the two provinces between the Indus and the hills is no where defined, and the object of the few troopers was evident, but the Governor, Sir Charles Napier, immediately ordered the wing of a regiment to Kushmor, a few miles below Rojhan, to preserve the integrity of his frontier from violation. The Lahore authorities were indeed put upon guard, but they did not admit the sufficiency of the reason given, and they looked upon the prompt measure of the conqueror of Sind as one more proof of the desire to bring about a war with the Punjab.²"

Yet another provocation was given to the Sikh just this time, when some villagers in the Sikh territory towards Ludhiana were captured by the British on the plea that some criminals had escaped there for whose recovery the Sikhs had refused to co-operate.

Sikh villages
occupied

1. Cunningham, History of the Sikhs.

2. Ibid. pp. 297-298.

Outspoken
Broadfoot

Mr. Clerk was replaced by Lt. Col. Richmond in June 1843 and the latter by Major Broadfoot in November 1841, as the British agent at Lahore. Such swift changes perplexed the Sikhs, and yet more so when the out-spoken Broadfoot declared that the cis-Sutlej possessions of Lahore should be under the protection of the British equally with Patiala and other chiefships of the reign¹. He "avowed that he had arranged to occupy the Lahore territory, cis—Sutlej, in case anything should happen to Daleep Singh who was then ill (with small-pox). And he forbade the Durbar to send any troops over for any purpose whatever."²

His views

Not only Broadfoot "acted as if the Lahore territories cis—Sutlej, were entirely under his control, but, as I now learn for the first time from his biography," thus adds Campbell, "he seems to have set up a formal claim to such a control, and asserted that this Lahore territory was just as much under his 'jurisdiction,' as he called it, as any of the small protected States... I can only say that I cannot find a word in the treaties or agreements of any kind to support it, and in all my connection with the office never saw anything to justify it."³

Lal Singh
Adalti

Giving a further account of Broadfoot's aggressive policy, thus writes Campbell, Lal Singh Adalti, a Lahore Judge, crossed the Sutlej for official duty, in the Lahore territory at Talwandi; and when Broadfoot learnt of it he "roughly and very peremptorily ordered the Sikh party back over the river. Lal Singh, not willing to risk a collision, obeyed, returned to the river and embarked his men. But Broadfoot, not satisfied with this, followed them in person..... At least one shot was fired .. the

1. Cunningham, pp. 295—296.

2. Campbell, his Memoirs, i, p. 76.

3. Ibid, i, p. 75

Shot fired

Sikh leaders were captured and detained. The shot then fired has been described as the first in the Sikh War.¹

First shot

II—The Punjab Traders.

There were, however, other factors as well, which led to the first Anglo-Sikh War. The traders and capitalists of a country, have never been the great lovers of her political freedom. Their freedom lies in the free opportunities to collect wealth, and for this, they would bother little, whether they are placed under a national or an alien rule. The Punjabi traders and capitalists, whether Hindus, Sikhs or Muslims, were made of no different alinement in this respect. British India was a big country, as compared to the Punjab of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and therefore it offered greater opportunities to carry goods from one place to the other, than the latter could. Moreover the Maharaja never seemed to have been an apologist for this class. He rather, never permitted them to grow fabulously rich and exploit the lower classes of the country². Naturally enough therefore, during the very life time of the Maharaja, their conspiracies began with the British. After the Maharaja's death there was a free correspondence between some of these traitors and some Englishmen in the British India. And there is no doubt that the British Governmental authorities too listened these traders with interest. These traders too therefore, played their part in developing British interest in the Punjab, and in hastening the pace towards the war catastrophe.

Conspired with British

III—The Sikh Army.

"The Sikh is naturally a soldier," wrote M'Gregor, "and cares for no other employment, which he is forbi-

1. Campbell, Memoirs, i, pp. 76—77.

2. See Foot Note, Gen. Criticism, in the chapter on 'Ranjit Singh's Conquests and Annexations'.

dden by the tenets of his religion to adopt. The sole aim of his life is to fight, and, however idle and dissipated he may become, he never forgets a science to which he has devoted his whole time and attention." Any clash with the English, therefore, if it came, would be welcome.

Sikh character

The Sikh army, as we have quoted Payne elsewhere, became self-governing body by the time of Sher Singh. Its affairs were conducted by panchayats, or councils of "five" representing each company, and elected by the soldiers themselves". In those days power was a dangerous possession. Every State official knew that to incur the displeasure of the army was equivalent to signing his own death warrant.¹ And again writes Sir Charles Gough, "they were under no efficient control, the rulers not venturing to treat them with a strong hand, and the regiments began mutinying and deposing their officers."² This chaotic and disorganised state of affairs, robbed the army soldiers of their reason and put them on blind faith in themselves. So much so that, the Lahore chiefs being threatened for their existence, began to put them on road to self-destruction by inspiring them for war against the English. The Kha'sa was thus urged to accept the British challenge, which the latter had been giving for long by their provocations, and by an aggressive policy against the Punjab. And this was done at that time, when the Khalsa was neither disciplined nor had they an efficient leadership.

Army Panchayats

No control

And again, the Tripartite Treaty had been signed between the English, Shah Shuja and Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1838.³ to reinstate the Shah on the Afghan

1. Payne, p. 151.

2. Gough, 'Sikhs and Sikh Wars'.

3. See Anglo-Sikh Relations.

throne. In 1839, the British forces marched into that country and with their help, the Shah entered Kabul on 7th August 1839; Dost Mohammad, the old ruler having evacuated four days earlier. From outside, the things seemed settled and the atmosphere seemed calm. But below the surface, the Afghan discontentment was brewing, and the eruption took place in November 1841, when a mob only of about 100 Afghans attacked the house of Burnes at Kabul and murdered him. On 23rd November, 1841 the English were signally defeated at Bamaru. Macnaughten signed a humiliating treaty on 11th December, whereby he agreed to withdraw his forces from the country forth-with. The departure date was fixed as 22nd December, but when Macnaughten delayed, the Afghans attacked him and he lost his life. The English retreated and soon, as P. E. Roberts writes, "the retreat became a rout, the rout a massacre."¹ This episode cost the British "15 millions sterling and 20,000 lives," writes Ishwari Prasad. And this gave an undur encouragement to the Khalsa army. If the British could be defeated at the hands of the Afghans, whom the Khalsa army given a crushing defeat on several times, the superiority of the Khalsa army over the British army was definitely established. This was a natural reaction in all military minds. The myth of the British invincibility was exploded, and the Khalsa must settle their old score with them. But this was an encouragement simply ill-timed. The Khalsa army got it when there were only inefficient hands and traitors to lead them. And this was one of the factors which precipitated the first Anglo-Sikh war.

And more yet. The British preparations at the border enraged them. "The Khalsa will not allow his land to be converted into a battle-field," and for this the initiative

British failure

encouraged them

British preparations

1. P. E. Roberts, p. 321.

had to be taken by them to kill the British lion in his own den.

High rate

"At the same time," writes Gough, "the gravity of the situation was increased by the fear that the very high rate of pay which the Sikh soldiery had extracted for themselves, and the general success which had attended their insubordination, was having an injurious effect on the morale of the sepoys in the British army.¹" Not only this. The Punjab authorities themselves were hard put to it. The monthly military expenditure, thus according to Payne, which in Ranjit Singh's time was 4 lakh rupees, had increased now to 9 lakhs, and the State income at the same time had fallen to its lowest ebb.² It was a difficult problem for the inefficient Lahore officials to face, and the British grew apprehensive that they might instigate the Khalsa for troubles in the South-East, for which the British authorities had been clamouring for long.

Clash not avoided

The indisciplined and disorganised State of affairs in the Khalsa army, and failure on the part of the Lahore authorities to meet the situation was thus a factor leading to the catastrophe, which could have been avoided.

IV—The Lahore Chiefs.

Moved 'as much by jealousy of one another as by a common dread of the army, the chiefs of the Punjab clung to wealth and ease rather than to honour and independence.'

Hira Singh

Raja Hira Singh, the young wazir, only 25 years of age, who had brought to the throne of Lahore the young king, Maharaja Dalip Singh only eight years of age, though a man of good habits of reflection and thoughtfulness, which he had acquired from the Lion of the

1. Gough, p 59.

2. Payne, p 159.

Punjab, the one eyed monarch, was yet a young man of hypocrisy and shrewdness of his father Raja Dhian Singh. Too much given to the habit of wearing jewellery, and rather of an effeminate appearance, although a man of considerable wit and genius and with great probabilities of being a success in the State-craft, yet unfortunately he fell under the influence of Pandit Julla Missar, a fanatic Brahmin of the mountains, professing to be a giant in astrological knowledge, who intoxicated the young Raja with false prophecies and heretic dreams. Considering the young Raja Hira Singh a stripling and too much inexperienced and incapable of discharging the high duties of wazarat entrusted to him, Rani Jindan countenanced by her brother Jawahar Singh and some other Sardars, encouraged her uncle Raja Suchet Singh to aspire for the office. Raja Suchet Singh, the younger brother of Raja Gulab Singh had rancorous and inveterate enmity with his nephew Raja Hira Singh, which had started in the days of the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh. When Pandit Julla heard of these plans he felt his position endangered along with that of his patron. In order to save the position, Pandit Julla advised the young Raja to take the necessary precautionary measures, before the efforts could be made by the opposite party to materialise their plans.

Precautions

Raja Hira Singh considered that the best way of saving his position, was to increase his popularity with the soldiery. He cleared the arrears of their pay forthwith and added further, an amount of Rs. 2-8-0 in the pay of a common soldier.

Pay increased

Besides this, Raja Hira Singh requested his uncle Gulab Singh also to be present in the capital. The latter reached Lahore on November 10, 1843, and having been honourably received at the court succeeded in effecting a reconciliation between Raja Hira Singh and some other nobles of the court, such as Lehna Singh Majithia, who

Gulab Singh called

effeminate

Julla

Jindan
planned

were suspected of having a hand in the conspiracy to dispossess Hira Singh of his office. But soon Gulab Singh began to behave in such manners as if he cared little whether the high office of wazarat was held by his brother or nephew, so long as his own independence was secure.

Jawahir
Singh

In the mean-while, Suchet Singh entered into conspiracy with Jawahir Singh, and induced him to mount an elephant with the young Maharaja, his nephew, in his arms, at a review of the Khalsa troops and complain to them of the ill-treatment which was meted out by the Prime Minister and his party to the royal child. Jawahir Singh chose a special hour of an evening for the purpose, mounted an elephant and appealed to the Khalsa as it had been planned. But in his anxiousness to dislodge Hira Singh, he went to such extent as even to threaten that if the Khalsa did not give a prompt support to him, he along with his nephew, would be forced to seek the British protection across the river Sutlej.

Threatened

Julia's
father-in
law

Jawahir in
chains

Fortunately for Hira Singh the Khalsa troops were at this time under the command of a Brahmin, the father-in-law of Julia, Missar Jodha Ram. Apprehensive that Gulab Singh may not actually hand over the child to the British at Ferozepur, during the same night, the council of Panches of the army was convened as a result of which, both Jawahir Singh and Suchet Singh were declared to be traitors to the Sikh State, whose object was to invite British Government in the Punjab. Early the next morning, both Maharaja Dalip Singh and his maternal uncle Jawahir Singh were brought back to the city. At the time of young Maharaja's entry into the city, a salute of 101 guns was fired and Jawahir Singh was put into iron chains and placed in close confinement. Suchet Singh, however, due to his strength and influence and due to the presence in the city of his powerful

brother Gulab Singh, was not touched. Soon after, both the brothers retired to Jammu. Before withdrawing however, the crafty Gulab Singh contrived to secure a huge amount of silver and gold and a great number of very valuable jewels and other riches which Hira Singh had hoarded up for himself and which his late father, Dhian Singh had left behind. On reaching his State, his eyes fell upon the riches of his childless brother Suchet Singh as well and soon the latter was contrived into publicly declaring Ram Bhir Singh, commonly known as Mian Pino, the youngest son of Gulab Singh, to have been adopted as son by him. Another immense fortune was thus secured to Gulab Singh from his brother Suchet Singh.

Gulab's son adopted

Just this time, Pandit Julla's impending plans to poison the young Maharaja Dalip Singh to death and put the son of Maharaja Sher Singh's widow on the throne instead, having been discovered, Maharani Jindan suppressed the evil in the bud.

Jullas' plans

Just about this time, Hira Singh was involved in another trouble. Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh, the two adopted sons of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who held Sialkot and Gujranwala respectively as their patrimony from their father, were supposed by certain persons to be having better claims to the throne than Maharaja Dalip Singh. To entangle them in troubles, Hira Singh bribed Kapur Singh, the Kardar of Sialkot under Kashmira Singh, to his favour. He made several disclosures, as a result of which the two brothers were charged of having complicity in the Sandhanwalia's plot which had resulted in the assassination of Maharaja Sher Singh. Raja Gulab Singh was ordered to seize their persons and property and realise from them a fine of 50 lakhs of rupees. But since even the adopted sons of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, had the profoundest respect

Kashmira
Singh
Peshora
Singh

Fined

nvaded

Left for
Manjha

Khalsa army

Persecuted
Hira Singh

of the Khalsa, due to the dread of the latter's resentment, this fine was reduced to 20,000 rupees and they were restored to their Jagirs, with the condition that they would not put Kapur Singh to any trouble. Soon after their restoration, however, the unfaithful servant Kapur Singh, was beaten by his master to death. Hira Singh got another pretext for an action against them and ordered on behalf of the Dardar, Gulab Singh to invade their territory. But the brothers by this time had made their military preparations and inflicted a signal defeat upon the forces of Gulab Singh. Gulab Singh requested reinforcement from Lahore. But the Khalsa would not consent to march against the brothers. Some Dogra troops and two of the Mahomedan battalions were despatched, but they also remained lukewarm for the fear lest the Khalsa be alienated against them an old battalion of Raja Dhian Singh had to be sent as reinforcement, with the help of which, after besieging the fort at Sialkot, Gulab Singh reduced the brothers who gave themselves up to the besiegers. They were permitted to vacate the fort along with their family and leave for the Manjha country.

While Gulab Singh was a success against these sons of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Sialkot, the Khalsa army which had refused to participate in an action against the brothers, grew furious, as the affairs at Sialkot prolonged by. Fearing lest the sons of the Maharaja be put to death, the Khalsa made Hira Singh's life at Lahore very precarious. They watched his movements with vigilance and for three or four days he was practically confined to his private residence, not being permitted to move out by the Khalsa. Not till they learnt that the lives of the brothers were safe and not till they were assured that Pandit Julla would not in future be permitted to have his obnoxious interference in the State affairs, that the Minister was released. Further, as a price of his ransom,

the Rani's brother, Jawahir Singh was got released by the Khalsa from confinement.

Raja Hira Singh fell into strait circumstances due to some other reasons as well. Arrears of revenue to the Lahore Darbar from many chiefs such as Diwan Mul Raj and even Gulab Singh were rising. Some troops at Peshawar, not having been able to get their desire for increased pay satisfied, rebelled and joined the forces of Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh. The Darbar faced an acute shortage of money. Pandit Julla checked up the financial records, dismissed some European officers from the State service as a mark of economy, and the chiefs near Lahore were pressed for money. This made both Pandit Julla and Raja Hira Singh unpopular, and as the emissaries of Raja Suchet Singh were already at work amongst some battalions, they got Khalsa invite him to come to Lahore with a promise that they would help him replace Hira Singh. A similar help was promised by some chiefs of the Lahore Darbar as well. And on this assurance Suchet Singh reached Shahdara on March 26, 1843, sending a message to the Khalsa that he had come. But the temper of the Khalsa troops was never reliable in those days of confusion. They had already changed their minds on the entreaties of Raja Hira Siagh, who according to Latif, "receiving an intelligence of the arrival of his uncle on the banks of the Ravi, collected the panches of the army and standing before them, with folded arms and every sign of humility and submissiveness, addressed them in the following terms:—

Financial records checked

Suchet Singh invited again

"Khalsa Ji! the son of your old Minister and the adopted son of your old Maharaja now stands in your presence as a suppliant. Tell him, I beg you, what fault he has committed, to punish which, you have invited his uncle, his greatest enemy and your inveterate foe, being as you are aware, a staunch ally of the Feringi. If you

Hira Singh's appeal

want to kill me, here is the sword, and I give you full liberty at once to sever my head from my body. It would be honour to me to die at the hands of the brave Khalsa

Reward promised

"This coupled with the promise of a reward of one gold butki to each soldier, infantry and cavalry, and one gold Kantha (necklace) to each officer, was enough to rouse the spirit of the Khalsa, who swore a fresh allegiance to the wazir and the extirpation of his uncle.¹"

Suchet refused

and fought

Undeterred by these developments, however, and determined not to retreat this time thus insulted, Raja Suchet Singh, leaving main body of his troops at Shahdara, and accompanied by about 400 soldiers, foot and horse and Rai Kesri Singh, his principal adviser, crossed the Ravi, and took up a position at the mausoleum of Mian Wadda near Lahore. The next morning, the mausoleum was besieged by the Khalsa troops, consisting of about 15,000 infantry, about 4,000 cavalry and 56 pieces of artillery. Many of his troops having deserted him and fled during the night, Raja Suchet Singh at this time, was left with only 45 soldiers to fight for him. And he resolved to fight. The passage from Ravi was cut off, lest Suchet Singh's levies from adjacent hills might join him and an assault was made upon the mausoleum with a tremendous cannonade upon its walls. After hearing some passages from the holy Granth, Raja Suchet Singh dashed at the head of his handful soldiers in front of the huge advancing columns of the Khalsa. He challenged them to come one by one and have a fair trial with him. For a moment, as a result of such gallant behaviour of Suchet Singh, the front columns of the Khalsa army were struck with awe. The handful of his brave soldiers advanced upon these troops

1. Latif, Vol. II, p. 525.

and in a moment's time, more than thirty of the front column lay dead. The further desperate valour displayed by the soldiers, caused a panic amongst the Khalsa army. But this state of affairs could not continue for a long time and soon Raja Suchet Singh and entire number of his 43 faithful soldiers, with the exception of only one who survived badly wounded, were done to death.

and was killed

Hira Singh's victory over Raja Suchet Singh was complete, the troops were ordered back to their quarters and the promised prizes were distributed among the soldiers and the officers.

Yet, another storm for Raja Hira Singh was in the making. Sardar Attar Singh Sandhanwalia, the brother (or nephew ?) of Ajit Singh, had been still at large. On May 2, 1844, he recrossed the river Sutlej and joined Bawa Bir Singh, a famous holy man of the Manjha country whose personal military strength, along with that of some chiefs who had been disgraced by the Darbar and were given a protection by him, was about 3,000 men, infantry and cavalry, and three guns. Attar Singh's aspiration was to benefit from the confusion at the Darbar and occupy the office of the Chief Minister himself. The Bawa supported him and addressed a secret circular letter to the leaders in the army and some chiefs of the Darbar, in which he made a mention as to how the Dogra ascendancy and the incapability of the child Dalip Singh had wrecked peace in the country, and forwarded that amongst the kinsmen of the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh Attar Singh was the most capable man, and therefore he should be given the charge of the government. The letters, however, were intercepted by Hira Singh. In the mean while the disaffected brothers Peshora Singh and Kashmira Singh had also joined the rebellious forces, and made the situation yet more threatening for him. He promptly prepared a large expedition and despatched it against the

Attar Singh,

Bawa Bir

Kashmira,
Peshora
create
trouble

Expedition

rebels under the charge of General Mian Labh Singh. The Khalsa troops, before they marched, expressly laid down that they would not injur in any manner the holy Bawa. Yet when they invaded, the Bawa was one among the first victims, "one of whose legs was carried away by a cannon ball," and later his immense treasures too were plundered. Attar Singh and Prince Kashmira Singh also fell in the field. And witnessing his brother's fate, Peshora Singh repaired to the Darbar and made his submission. He was forgiven and his property and jagir were restored to him.

Gulab Singh
Differences

For a time, tranquility reigned once again and Hira Singh looked forward to a promising future. But bitter differences arose between Raja Hira Singh and his uncle Gulab Singh regarding the division of the property left by Suchet Singh. The situation took a serious turn and Raja Hira Singh sent twenty battalions of infantry to Jammu. A corresponding number of cavalry and artillery were also despatched. The ugly situation however, was avoided when Bhai Ram Singh, Sheikh Immam-ud-din and Dewan Dina Nath brought about an understanding between the two, Raja Gulab Singh sending Mian Sohan Singh, his eldest son, as hostage to Raja Hira Singh and the latter sending to Gulab Singh his younger brother, Mian Jawahir Singh, in the same capacity.

Avoided

Raja Hira Singh thus reached the height of his career and influence. But he was, again, not destined to rule in peace for a long time. The attitude of his own and that of his family priest, and the tutor of his sons, Pandit Julla, in whose crafty and ambitious hands, he had become simply a headless tool, alienated almost all the chiefs of the Darbar. Lahna Singh Majithia, a very capable and sagacious Sardar, rather quitted Punjab on a pretext of visiting Hardwar. The only other important chief left being Lal Singh, the favourite of Maharani

Chiefs alien-
ated

Jindan herself. Pandit Julla's dealings with Lal Singh were very cordial, having exchanged turbans with him, but he talked of the Rani herself with a scant respect, and hated her brother, Jawahir Singh, who withdrew himself to Amritsar in time, and by inciting the Akalis and some other fanatics, and later by getting the promises of support from the Khalsa troops themselves, he hatched out a plot to finish the Dogra influence at Lahore. Lal Singh leaving his friendship with Julla, entered into conspiracy with the Rani, who herself was tired of the Dogra influence. They supplied money to Jawahir Singh for distribution among Nihangs and other fanatics, to make them take up their cause.

Jawahir
Singh's plot

One morning, on the first day of the month, the Rani, as usual, distributed golden pieces to the poor, for the good health of the young Maharaja. Pandit Jalla, hearing of it, threatened and abused her very grossly. Jawahir Singh taking the advantage, appealed to the Khalsa army against this insult to the wife of the late Maharaja, whom they loved so much. The Khalsa army was in rage, and early one morning, at a review of the troops, Jawahar Singh having placed himself at the head of the Khalsa troops, demanded Pandit Julla to be immediately handed over to him. Raja Hira Singh, however, flatly refused, but sensing the brewing troubles, the Raja decided immediately for a flight to save his life. Putting all his valuables on elephants, accompanied by Pandit Julla and Pandit Sohan Singh and attended by about four hundred horse and foot, he left for Jammu on the morning of 21st December 1844, under the pretext of visiting Mian Mir, to inspect the forces stationed there. He had, however, hardly reached Taxali Gate of the city, when the Sikh regiments sounded the trumpets saluting Jawahir Singh to wazarat. Hira Singh having heard the trumpet*, hastened his pace, but was overtaken about 600 yards from the Shahdara village by a large party of horse-men. As

Maharani
abused

Army in rage

Hira and
Julla fled,

the enemy troops approached Hira Singh, he emptied some of his bags of ashrafis upon them, and while the troops were engaged in picking them up, he hastened out of their reach. But once again the troops overtook him, again he emptied his bags and the practice continued for a distance of about 12 kos, when Pandit Julla fell from his horse out of exhaustion and was cut to pieces. Some distance away, Hira Singh dismounted to quench his thirst in a village. The village was surrounded by General Venturas' Dragoons, and on the order of Jawahir Singh, and set on fire. Hira Singh hearing of it, remounted his horse, but was cut to pieces in his attempt to escape. The heads of Hira Singh, Pandit Julla and Sohan Singh were brought back. Jawahir Singh made his triumphant entry into the capital at about mid-day, when he was given an enthusiastic reception. These heads were submitted to the greatest ignominy, more so that of Julla, which was carried from house to house, spat upon and thrown to dogs. The others were hanged at the gates of the town, and later thrown into the private room of Raja Dhian Singh, from where they were recovered later by Raja Gulab Singh at the time of the British occupation of Lahore.

Jawahir Singh becomes Wazir.

Rewards After this victory of Jawahir Singh with the help of the Khalsa troops, his first concern was to continue himself in the Khalsa's favour. To do this, he got the golden utensils in the Royal Toshakhana immediately melted and preparing of them the golden bracelets, he distributed them among the Khalsa troops. This won him further the acclaims of the soldiers. Shortly after this the Darbar demanded of Gulab Singh the restoration of all the property of Hira Singh and Suchet Singh and imposed upon him further, a fine of three crore rupees. Gulab Singh having refused to comply, the Khalsa army was

Cut to
pieces

Spat upon

Rewards

Gulab Singh

Khalsa army

ordered to march on Jammu. In the first engagement between the Khalsa and the Dogras, Fateh Singh Man, the beloved leader of the Khalsa lost his life. This infuriated the Khalsa, who proceeded violently ahead. Gulab Singh conscious of his weakness, changed his tactics. Bringing with him his nephew, Mian Jawahir Singh, who was respected by the Khalsa, he fell on knees before the panches and begged to be pardoned. His free distribution of money among the soldiers, and these tactics, won him a success, and being safely carried to Lahore, he was honourably received by the Maharani. Here by his charming manners and the rendering of full accounts and by his humble submissions he was able to win the Rani's heart to such an extent that she actually offered him the office of wazir, which had not so far been formally invested on her brother. Jawahir Singh's will, however, prevailed and Gulab Singh unnecessarily won the displeasure of this sardar. As the wind began to blow against him, he decided to leave Lahore immediately but before doing that he was shorn of much of his power and wealth. He had to give up all the property of Suchet Singh and Hira Singh, and being dispossessed of many other rights and privileges, he promised to pay the fine of 68 lakh rupees to the Darbar and left Lahore after about five month's sojourn in much disgust and dismay.

Brought him
to Lahore,

Insulted

Peshora

Soon, however Jawahir Singh had to face another trouble. Crafty Gulab Singh after having reached his hill State, began to incite Peshora Singh, the reputed son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who was at that time leading a retired life at Gujranwala—his Jagir, to renew his claims on the Punjab throne. On the other hand, he advised Jawahir Singh to do away with him, somehow or the other, if he desired to have a secure future. Peshora Singh proceeded to Lahore, where he was honorably received by the Rani, but having met with a cold reception from the wazir, he immediately retired to

at Lahore

General Avitable's house, outside the city, where he was surrounded by the panches of the army and promised help. Seeing this serious drift against him, the wazir consulted his sister and distributed, once again, huge amount of money among the soldiers and won them back. The Khalsa asked the prince to leave and wait for a more favourable opportunity.

Peshora Singh went back, but soon after, having occupied the fort of Attock, proclaimed himself as Maharaja and began to contact Dost Mohamad of Kabul. Gulab Singh had lost one opportunity, but got another and advised the wazir to get the prince removed from his way once for all. Jawahir Singh sent Khalsa troops against the prince, but he was held by the Khalsa in so high respect that they refused at his sight to fight against him. Chuttur Singh Attariwala, the father-in-law of Dalip Singh, and Fatteh Khan Tiwan, a close friend of the wazir, were then ordered to march against the prince. The two marched upon Attock, but on reaching there, found the power of the prince too formidable and deciding to play diplomacy, started to negotiate with him. The negotiations continued for about ten days, as a result of which, the prince was put off his guard. The sardar entered the fort, and at night, got him strangled to death.

When Jawahir Singh received this news, despite the advice of his seasoned friends, he thundered the city with joyous royal salutes and got it profusely illuminated in the night. This was too much for the Khalsa to tolerate and their rage passed all bounds. The Dogra element lost no opportunity of adding fuel to the fire, and the deputies of the Khalsa army were even promised rich rewards for an action against the wazir.

Leaders of the Khalsa army now despatched messengers to the wazir, desiring his presence before them. The wazir, confident that he would once again be able to

Proclaimed
Maharaja

strangled
to death

Illuminated

Khalsa
demanded
presence

bribe the soldiers, slept over them, little knowing that rich rewards had already been promised to them by the Dogras. A portion of the army marched upon the fort. Their bugles and drums aroused him from the foolish slumber, and having consulted his sister, he immediately came out of the fort, seating himself upon an elephant with the child Maharaja on his lap, and his sister following him on another elephant, the wazir proceeded in the midst of the soldiers in a vain hope that the presence of his sister and the Maharaja would save him from the terrible destiny that awaited. Working on a set plan, the wazir was saluted by the soldiers all around, but when he reached in the thick of them the bugles and the drums sounded a signal for action. The Wazir's elephant was abruptly stopped and its driver forced to make it kneel. The wazir bowed in utter helplessness for forgiveness but the child Maharaja being ruthlessly pulled out of his lap, a sword was plunged into his body and a bullet sent into his brain. He was mercilessly dragged, and molested, his advisers killed at the spot, and the Rani forced to retire to tents nearby. This happened in the afternoon of 21st September, 1845. As the dawn broke on 22nd September, the Rani was permitted to see the molested, disfigured and soiled body of her brother. It was a heart-rending scene when, in the words of Latif, 'her lamentations and painful cries were renewed with a violence which moved the by-standers to pity and melted even the iron hearts of those who had been instrumental in causing her brother's murder. Weeping bitterly she threw herself and her child on the body of her brother, and when, partly by entreaties and partly by force, she was separated from the corpse, she rolled upon the ground, tearing her hair and her clothes¹.' The corpse was carried to the funeral pyre. Two of the wazir's Ranis

Mercilessly
killed

Maharani's
lamentation

1. Latif, Vol. ii, p. 536.

and three of his slave girls, committed themselves to fire along the wazir's body. It was a horrible scene, and showed the diplorable extent to which the morale of the soldiers had fallen. Latif writes, "As these poor defenceless women were marching in solemn procession to the altar, with all their money and jewellery in open trays, carried by men on either side of them, for the purpose of distribution in charity, these armed ruffians remorselessly plundered them, and as the unfortunate women were mounting the funeral pyre, these villainous guards tore away their nose and ear—ornaments (which were worn in strict conformity with their religion) from their persons. The cries and remonstrances of the women at the indignities to which they were subjected were treated by those monsters as if they had been the variest ribaldry. Not satisfied with what they had already robbed, they actually snatched from the fire the trinkets and embroidery on their costly attire. The helpless victims, stretching their hands towards heaven, cursed the whole Sikh nation to which the savages belonged¹."

Inhuman action

To divert attention

The Rani continued conducting the State affairs with Teja Singh the Commander-in-chief, Lal Singh as executive Minister and she herself as regent. But she saw her perilous situation, writes Latif. "With an empty treasury and the resources of the kingdom exhausted, she was left in no position to feed the rapacity of the turbulent Sikh soldiers, who now openly talked of proclaiming the infant son of Sher Singh, as Maharaja of the Punjab. To divert their attention in another direction, as also to break their union and power, the Rani and her friends originated the proposal of crossing the Sutlej to make war on the British Government¹." Dr. G. C. Narang also writes: the Rani "put herself in touch with British authorities and instigated them to provoke the Sikhs to

1. Latif, ii, pp. 536-537.

2. Latif, ii, p.538.

war by taking possession of a part of the Sikh territory close to the left bank of Sutlej¹." The point was as Gough writes, "the Khalsa was to be urged to challenge the British. If it were shattered, the court would be rid of its masters; if triumphant, the court would claim the credit²."

Challenge
the British

The Maharani and her advisers may actually have instigated the soldiers to cross the Sutlej. But even if it was so, it was no aggression against the British. Aggression by the English against the Punjab, in fact, had already been committed. Provocations had been given to the true lovers of the national honour and integrity. And whereas a strong and seasoned ruler of Lahore like Ranjit Singh should have replied to this aggression at a more opportune time and in a more disciplined manner, the present Lahore rulers did so out of a mere desperation. There was no war planning. They simply took a chance and lost it, as it was bound to be.

took wrong
chance

Robertson had predicted, "the enterprising commercial spirit of the English, and the martial ardour of the Sikhs, who possess the energy natural to men in the earlier stages of the society, can hardly fail to lead sooner or later to open hostility." And this proved correct.

Thus different factors led to the First Anglo-Sikh war. There is no doubt that the British had been following an aggressive policy towards the Punjab from an early time, and this created disaffection in the minds of the Lahore chiefs and the Khalsa army. Ranjit Singh was wise and managed to keep the British at an arm's length. But his

Thus
different
factors

1. Transformation, p. 308.

2. Gough, 'The Sikhs and Sikh Wars', p. 57.

Lion and a victim.

successors too immature and inexperinced, the chiefs of the Lahore Darbar too foolish and selfish, the Khalsa army too indisciplined and untamed, and all with inadequate resources and ill—planned strategy, threw themselves into the wide opened mouth of the lion of British imperialism. The lion was too anxious to swallow, the victim to fool to understand. Both walked towards each other, and the consequences were natural.

CHAPTER XV

The First Anglo-Sikh War

B—The Sikh Defeat.

Details of the first Anglo -Sikh War may not be given here, for which the reader may be referred to 'The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars,' by General Sir Charles Gough and Arthur D. Innes; 'The life and Campaigns of Hugh, First Viscount Gough,' by R. S. Rait; The Despatches of Viscount Hardinge, Lord Gough and Henry Smith, 1846, and the biographies of Lord Dalhousie and Viscount Hardinge. A brief refrence may, however, be made here to causes of the Sikh defeat.

I—The Causes.

The first and the most important factor leading to the failure of the Khalsa army was the treachery and incapability of their own leaders. Immediately after the Khalsa army crossed the river Sutlej, the best course for them should have been to attack Ferozepure. Had they done so, thus writes Ludlow, "our garrison of 8,000 men would have been destroyed and the victorious 60,000 would have fallen on Sir Henry Hardinge, who had then but 8,000¹." But instead of doing that Lal Singh, the traitor wazir of Lahore, who had already been in correspondence with the British Political Agent, and who was determined to win British favour, addressed Captain Peter Nicholson, the Assisstant Agent at Ferozepur thus:

Ferozepur
not attacked

"I have crossed the Sikh army. You know my friend-ship for the British. Tell me what to do."

1. British India, ii, p. 142.

To which Nicholson replied. "Do not attack Ferozepur. Halt as many days as you can, and then march towards the Governor-General.

It was a tragedy indeed. The Sikhs thus lost the chance for a sure victory. "The treason saved the English from a sure defeat¹" The object of Lal Singh, and Tej Singh who was the Commander-in-Chief of the Sikh forces, "was not to compromise themselves with the English by destroying an isolated division, but to get their own troops dispersed by the converging forces of their opponents²."

And thus
lost the first
chance for
victory

Army itself

The army itself, however, "was filled with a vehemently hostile feeling towards the British," thus writes Gough, "and a strong sense of self-confidence and of loyalty to the Khalsa. Loyalty to the Darbar it had none; its vows were to the Khalsa, its vows were to the Sikh brotherhood,.....But this turbulent and insubordinate body, recklessly democratic in its political treatment of the Government was fully alive to the impossibility of democratic methods in the field; and the Panchayats now laid aside their assumed control, formally accepting the purely military purposes³."

The battle
of Mudki

The earnestness of the Sikh army, however, was of no avail against the treachery of the leaders in whom they had reposed their confidence. As arranged, Lal Singh stayed on till Sir Hugh Gough, the British Commander-in-chief, brought his main army actually in the field. The Ambala and Ludhiana divisions of the British army arrived at Mudki, twenty miles to the south-east of Ferozepur, where the first action took place on December

1. Col. Mouton, 'Report Sur Les Derniers Envenemens du Punjab,' Paris, p. 5 (In French)

2. Cunningham, p. 263.

3. 'The Sikhs and Sikh Wars,' p. 66.

18, 1845. Lal Singh headed an attack against the British army with his full force, with a sinister object that "the British might have a full and fair opportunity of destroying them¹." And in the thick of the battle, while "the fight was going on with great fierceness on both sides," writes Latif, "Lal Singh, in accordance with his original design, suddenly abandoned the field, leaving the Sikhs to fight as their valour might prompt²." The hardy Sikhs not discouraged by the treachery of their Commander, continued the conflict with undiminished energy and devotion. But they could not do so for a long time under such state of affairs, and ultimately they had to give way, being driven from post to post at the point of bayonet. "The battle lasted until an hour and a half of dim star light, amidst clouds of dust from the sandy plains." The British purchased the victory at a very high price, and that too, thus writes Pearson, "because Lal Singh according to plan, took no interest in the battle after issuing the order to attack³."

Soldiers
abandoned

The second action was fought at Ferozshahr, a village about ten miles both from Mudki and Ferozepur, on December, 21, 1845. The attack this time was led by the British, with full preparations and a confidence, that helped by the Sikh traitors, they would be able to win an easy victory. But they were mistaken in this. The Sikh army this time again, was led by Lal Singh, assisted by Tej Singh: But despite the unworthy intentions of their leaders, the resistance the British met from them was wholly unexpected, and the British started with astonishment. The attack was led by the British at about three O'clock, but the fight continued till darkness fell.

Battle of
Ferozshahr

British
repulsed

1. M'Gregor, ii, p. 81.

2 'History of the Punjab,' ii, p. 541.; see also Cunningham, pp. 264-65

3. 'Hero of Delhi,' p. 79.

The obstinacy and persistency with which the Sikhs carried on their contest, threw the English into confusion and disorder.

The night that ensued was truly designated a "night of terrors. "The night of the 21st December," thus wrote Sir Henry, "was the most extraordinary of my life. I bivouacked with the men without food and covering and our nights were bitter cold." The British lost their heart so completely that they were even planning an unconditional surrender to the Sikhs. Thus wrote Robert Cust, in his journal on December 22. "News came from the Governor General that our attack of yesterday had failed, that affairs were desperate, that all State papers were to be destroyed, and that if morning attack failed, all would be over; this was kept secret by Mr. Currie and we were concerting measures to make an unconditional surrender to save the wounded, the part of the news that grieved me the most."¹

The best course for the Sikhs at this time should have been to attack the British during the very night, and then end the game. But the Sikh leaders were not prepared to risk a victory against the British. As arranged, again, Lal Singh disappeared from the scene with guns and most of his men during the night. On the morning of December 22, the remnants of the Sikh forces were easily driven from their camp. But as the day advanced, the seconded wing of the Sikh army, commanded by Tej Singh, who had been urged by his zealous and sincere soldiery to fall upon the English, approached in battle-array, "and the wearied and famished English saw before them a desperate and, perhaps, useless

Night of
terror

Lal Singh
disappeared

Tej Singh

1. 'Linguistic and Oriental Essays,' VI, p. 43.

2. Cunningham, p. 267.

struggle.¹" But Tej Singh was no better than Lal Singh in his treachery. Had he attacked, "the British could never have survived the onset of the thirty thousand fresh troops But the Sikh commander hesitated," as previously arranged. "At eleven o'clock he opened fire on the left of his enemy's position, and again hesitated. Four hours later he threatened an attack on their right, and then, to the utter astonishment and intense satisfaction of the weary defenders, his whole force was seen to turn suddenly northwards and move off rapidly in the direction taken by the vanquished battalions of Lal Singh."¹ And thus did the destiny bestow a victory upon the British.

Deceived
the Sikh

"The battle of Ferozeshahr was one of the most momentous, and certainly the hardest fought-out one, ever engaged in by the British in India." "It has been said," thus writes Gordon, "that the Sikhs then shook our Indian Empire to its base."

The hardest

Just this time, as if encouraged by the help of the Sikh traitor, the Governor-General issued a proclamation on December 31, calling upon the natives of Hindustan, who had taken service under the Lahore Government, to quit their service at once. The proclamation ran thus: "it is hereby proclaimed, that any non-commissioned officer or soldier of the Lahore Government who shall present himself before his Excellency the Governor-General, shall be immediately rewarded with the accustomed liberality, and shall have the benefit of invalid pension; and, if engaged in law suit in a British Court of justice, his case shall be immediately decided before any other...."

Seductive
British offer

¹: Payne, p. 175.

Such declarations from the British, although they did confirm some of the Sikh leaders in the treacherous attitude that they were following, had little effect upon the morale of the common Sikh soldier. There was a lull in the storm, as the traitors among Sikhs had conspired to give the British a sufficient time to re-organise their Camp. Sardar Ranjodh Singh who was loyal to the Sikh standard, however, took the opportunity and helped by Sardar Ajit Singh of Ladwa, attacked Ludhiana with 8,000 men and 70 guns, burning a portion of its contonment. The town was then very much under-garrisoned, and Sir Harry Smith, with a considerable body of troops, was ordered to march to its relief. The Sikhs however intercepted him at Badhowal, in the way, killed a number of his men and captured the whole of his baggage on January 21, 1846.

The heavy loss suffered by the English at Badhowal made them indeed glance "firtively at one another," writes Cunningham. They "looked towards the east, their home; and the brows of English men themselves grew darker at the thought of struggles rather than triumphs... the leader of the beaten brigades saw before him a tarnished name after the labours of a life, nor was he met by many encouraging hopes of rapid retribution."¹

On January 22, Ranjodh Singh withdrew to the Sutlej, and Sir Henry Smith immediately occupied the deserted position of the Sikhs. On January 28, he moved out to attack the Sikhs, who were found at the village of Aliwal at a distance of eight miles. While according to some writers he inflicted a crushing defeat upon Ranjodh Singh and thus retrieved his position, it is doubted that the action was more than a scrimmage. Still, however, it was necessary to re-inforce the waning morale of the British soldiers, and therefore, "As an Irishman would

Sikhs
attacked
Ludhiana

Inflicted
heavy loss

English
name
tarnished

To retrieve

A mere
scrimmage

1. Cunningham, p. 274.

say," writes Dr. Andrew Adams, "we gained a disadvantage at Budiwal; by the baggage of the army falling into the hands of the enemy, that no exaggeration could well turn into a victory; but shortly afterwards, a few shots, and the charge of a squadron or two in pursuit of a host of retreating Sikhs, were magnified into a grand combat, and thus the plain of Aliwal has been recorded as the scene of one of India's Marathons.¹"

was magnified

The last battle of the First Anglo-Sikh war, was fought at Sobraon, on February 10, 1846. Lal Singh had played his part and now came the turn of Gulab Singh to win the British favours. After the so called Sikh defeat at Alipur and their withdrawal to their own side of the river Sutlej, the Governor-General seemed to have contented himself for the time being with it. The British reputation had been saved and the aggressors pushed across the river into Their own territories just his time, however, Gulab Singh appeared on the scene ostensibly on behalf of the Lahore Darbar and opened negotiations with the British. An understanding soon was reached that "the Sikh army should be attacked by the English and that when beaten it should be openly abandoned by its own government; and further, that the passage of the Sutlej should be unopposed and the road to the capital laid open to the victors. Under such circumstances of discreet policy and shameless treason," writes Cunningham, "was the battle of Sobraon fought."

Battle of Sobraon

Gulab Singh

The Khalsa troops by this time had lost all confidence in their leaders. The Panches went in a body to Gulab Singh, "offering to make him minister, and begging him to proceed at once to the Sutlej and take over the chief command," little knowing that he was no better than Lal Singh and Tej Singh in his anxiousness to get the Khalsa destroyed. Having entered into agreement with the

Deceived the Khalsa.

1. Wandering of a Naturalists in India, pp. 60-61.

British, Gulab Singh "temporised with the Panches, without actually refusing to assume the command of the army, contrived from day to day to postpone till the hour he had been contemplating came—the hour when the army of the Khalsa had no further use for a commander."¹"

No ration
and supplies

In the meanwhile, he stopped sending rations and supplies to the army. The army delegates met Maharani Jindan, to appraise her of the situation, and tell her how they were being starved. "The Maharani, however", writes Gordon, "was getting desperate; the Khalsa was on her nerves; she was in terror at the thought of their returning. She with the little Maharaja Dalip Singh, received the deputation in Durbar and heard their appeal." She upbraided them as cowards, took off part of her dress and threw it among them, saying, "this is your dress. Remain at home; I will go and fight." The resolve to get them destroyed was known to them, but such was the stern democratic discipline of their army councils, such their devotion to their warlike faith, that determination even now animated every man. They fiercely reproached her and her courtiers. Addressing the Maharaja, they said, "We will go and die for you, your kingdom, and the Khalsaji," but to the others who had incited them to war and now taunted them with their folly in hoping to vanquish the conquerors of Hindustan, they said "we will leave you to answer to your God and your Guru, while we, deserted and betrayed as we are, will do what we can to preserve the independence of our country."²"

Army cross-
ed the river

The Sikh army led by traitors, crossed the river Sutlej as planned, and the battle of Sobraon was fought on February 10. The British attacked the Sikhs thrice,

1. Payne, 'A short History of the Sikhs,' p. 179.

2. Gordon, p. 147

but all the times they were successfully repulsed by the Sikhs. One more victory for the Sikhs should not have been unexpected for their valour and courage, when in the thick of the fight, Tej Singh and Lal Singh fled the field in fulfilment of their agreement with the British. The Khalsa was, thus, once again left to its own fate, deserted by the leaders, assailed on all sides by the enemy, without a hope of re-inforcement or supply. They fought as best as they could. But the circumstances limited their chances for victory. As if not satisfied with what the traitors had already done to their kinsfolk, with the previous consent of the enemy, Lal Singh and Tej Singh got the bridge of boats on the river broken. Thus robbing the Khalsa of the only escape in case defeated. The Khalsa was thus defeated and slaughtered, while its leaders stood aside unconcerned with their annihilation.

Thus was the British defeat once again turned into a victory, "by the convenient flight of Tej Singh who damaged the bridge of boats over the Sutlej on his way and so helped to drown a large number of his country men¹."

Referring to the great slaughter of the Sikhs at Sobraon, Sir Hugh Gough, the British Commander-in-Chief, himself commented: "Policy prevented my publicly recording my sentiments of the splendid gallantry of a fallen foe, and I declare, were it not from a conviction that my country's good required the sacrifice, I could have wept to have witnessed the fearful slaughter of so devoted a body²".

Treachery of their own leaders was thus the main cause of the Sikh defeat. But the honesty and determination of Sir Gough and his men, to save the British name in India at any cost, can not be passed unmentioned.

Lal Singh
and Teja
Sing

Destroyed
bridge

Got Sikhs
destroyed

Drowned

Gough on
sllaughter

The British
determi-
nation

1. Hesketh Pearson, 'The Hero of Delhi,' p. 80.

2. Gough, p. 138.

The fortitude shown by them after a disaster at Badhowal and the presence of mind to take an opportunity whenever it offered itself, was no doubt a factor which crowned the British with the final victory. Sir, Gough "was essentially a fighting general, a hard hitter, whose maxim was "*L'audace, toujours l'audace.*" He grasped success. The generals, among them veterans of the Peninsula, Waterloo, and Afghanistan, were first and foremost in thick of battle, exposing their lives freely and rousing the daring of their men to the utmost by personal example, several of them falling "in the rapture of the strife," cheering on to victory¹."

II—The Treaty of Lahore.

On 9th March, 1846, the Treaty of Lahore was signed between the British and the Lahore Darbar, the more essential terms of which may here be mentioned.

Southern territories
1—All the Sikh territories lying south of the river Sutlej, were handed over to the British.

Jullundur Doab
2—The Jullundur Doab was likewise annexed by the British to their own dominion.

"The Governor-General desired not only to chastise the Sikhs for their past aggressions, but to over-awe them for the future, and he had thus chosen the Beas, as offering more commanding positions with reference to Lahore than the old boundary of the Sutlej," thus writes Cunningham.

Idemnity
3—An indemnity of Rs 1½ crores was imposed upon the Lahore Darbar, which they being not able to pay, they had to hand over to the British in its lieu, all the hill area between the rivers Sutlej and Beas, including Kashmir and Hazara.

Disband
4—The Darbar would disband the rebellious forces, keeping only 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry. 34

1. *Ibid.* p. 161.

guns which the British had lost to the Sikhs, were restored to them.

5—The British troops would be allowed a free passage through the Punjab when necessary. Passage

Dalip Singh was recognised as minor king of Lahore, Maharani Jindan was to be his regent and Lal Singh the Prime Minister of the Punjab. Dalip Singh

Soon after, on March 11, 1846, to further strengthen the British hold on the Punjab, another treaty was dictated to the Darbar, under which:— Another treaty

1—An adequate British force would be stationed at Lahore, for the so called protection of the Maharaja. The force would be recalled in December 1846. Br. force at Lahore

2—The British Government would respect the bona fide rights of the jagirdars in Lahore territories. Jagirdars

3—The British would be at liberty to retain any part of the State property in the forts situated in the ceded territories, by paying for it a fair compensation. Forts

Besides the seven years old Maharaja the treaties were signed by seven other chiefs on behalf of the Darbar. And of these seven, two were the notorious Lal Singh and Tej Singh, and third, Bhai Ram Singh, an agent of Raja Gulab Singh. Seven others

At 4 p. m. on 9th of March, 1846, when the first treaty was signed with the Sikhs, the Governor-General declared that "the British Government desires to see a Sikh Government re-established, which may be able to control its army, protect its subjects, and willing to respect the rights of its neighbours." A desire

"By this treaty, the Lahore Government has sufficient strength to resist and punish any native power which Strong enough

may venture to assail it, and to put down all internal commotions.¹"

Sir Henry Lawrence was appointed as the British Resident at Lahore, and it was only to be seen, how the British kept the promises thus made.

H. Lawrence
Separate
treaty with
Gulab
Singh

Unworthy

A passing reference may here be made as to how Raja Gulab Singh was rewarded by the British for the so valuable aid which he rendered them in helping them occupy Lahore. On March 15, 1846, the title of Maharaja was formally invested upon him. And on March 16, 1846, a separate treaty with Gulab Singh was concluded at Amritsar, by which the province of Kashmir was sold to him for one crore rupees, and a part of this money was paid by Gulab Singh from out of the treasury of Kashmir, which, Kashmir being part of the territory of Lahore Darbar, belonged in fact to Maharaja Dalip Singh. Commenting on this transaction writes Cunningham : this "transaction scarcely seems worthy of the British name and greatness, and the objections become stronger when it is considered that Gulab Singh had agreed to pay sixtyeight lakhs of rupees (£ 680,000), as a fine to his paramount (Lahore Darbar), before the war broke out, and that the custom of the East as well as of the West requires the feudatory to aid his lord in foreign war and domestic strife. Gulab Singh ought thus to have paid the deficient million of money as a Lahore subject, instead of being put in possession of Lahore provinces as an independent prince." And further he writes, later on even these "payments required from him were" reduced by a fourth, and they were rendered still more easy of liquidation by considering him to be the heir to the money which his

1. M'Gregor, ii, p. 232.

brother Suchet Singh had buried in Ferozepur¹". It was indeed, writes Gordon "a very had bargain for the Government, which unfortunately was rendered necessary by the political exigency of the moment²."

Lal Singh who became Prime Minister of the subdued Punjab, however, was not satisfied with the prize he was able to get for all the slaughter he had been instrumental in bringing about in his kins-folk. He was jealous of Gulab Singh's elevation to the throne of Kashmir, and therefore, after signing the Treaty of Amritsar, when Gulab Singh attempted to enter Kashmir to occupy it in October, Sheikh Imam-ud-din, the Governor of the province was instigated by him to resist Gulab Singh. The matter being reported to the Governor-General, the British troops were immediately despatched to enforce obedience to the terms of the treaty. As a result, the rebellious governor submitted forth-with and even placed a documentary proof in the hands of Colonel Lawrence, that he had been incited by Lal Singh. Lal Singh's fate was thus sealed. Being charged there and then in the council of the assembled sardars, for having violated the terms of the Treaty of Lahore, he was removed from his office, dispossessed of his jagirs, and banished from the Punjab.

Thus did Gulab Singh succeed in occupying the province of Kashmir. "In the year 1808, Gulab Singh was earning three rupees a month and his rations as a common soldier in an obscure fortress on the banks of the jhelum. He was now, while still under sixty years of age, the absolute monarch of 80,000 square miles of territory. If he was not at the top of the ladder of his ambition, he was certainly as high up on it as he deserved

Lal Singh
opposed

and was
banished

The height

1. Cunningham, p. 232.

2. Gordon, p. 164.

to be..... whatever his faults, Gulab Singh was a statesman of proved ability.¹"

III—The treaty of Bhirowal.

British plan to continue

Under the Treaty of Lahore, the British were bound to withdraw their troops from the Punjab in December 1846. But before the stipulated date for their withdrawal came, they had already decided to continue their stay and strengthen their hold yet further upon the Punjab. But to carry the plan into effect, it was essential that dust must be thrown into the eyes of the people and they be made to believe that the British were doing nothing which the high principles of morality forbade. The proposal for the stay of the British troops in Lahore, till Dalip Singh became major, must originate with the Lahore chiefs, and the British must accept it only reluctantly. Sir Henry Lawrence therefore, desired of his Secretary, Frederick Currie, on the 12th of December, "Preserve in your line of making the Sikh Durbar propose the condition or rather their readiness to assent to any conditions imposed as the price of the continuance of our support. In the preamble of the supplementary Articles, this solicitation must clearly be their act."²"

Instructions

The Governor-General, Lord Hardinge, also issued instructions to Currie to make certain bogus military movements, as if the British troops were actually going to be withdrawn. "My object," he wrote, "is to give the Lahore Darbar a hint, that the Garrison is on the move."³"

Reluctant

The Lahore chiefs were naturally reluctant to continue British troops in Lahore, and in this connection thus did Hardinge write to Currie : "The coyness of the Darbar

1. Payne, p. 186.

2. H. to C., Dec. 14, 1846, P. & R. I. Poona Records.

3. H. to C., Dec. 12, 1846; P & R. I. Poona Records.

is very natural; but it is very important that the proposal should originate with them; and in any documents proceeding from them this admission must be stated in clear and unqualified terms; our reluctance to undertake a heavy responsibility must be set forth.¹"

Ultimately, therefore, the British did succeed in manoeuvring the assent of the leading chiefs of Lahore. A conference of the chiefs was held on December 15, 1846, from which Maharani Jindan, from whom active opposition was feared, was studiously excluded. Mr. Currie read out the British conditions, which were agreed to without any discussion or dissent. And thus was the Treaty of Bhairowal concluded and signed on the following day, the 16th of December.

British
manoeuvred.

It was laid down in the treaty:

1—The British forces would continue staying in Lahore till 4th September, 1854, when Dalip Singh would become 16 years of age; for which the Darbar would pay Rs. 22 lakhs a year to meet the expenses.

The treaty

2—Till Dalip Singh became major, the Punjab Government would be carried under the control of the British Resident, by a Regency Council of 8 sirdars, in which in the words of the Governor-General, he could make any change, "and appoint others."

3—Besides Lahore, the British troops could be put into any Sikh fortress, the occupation of which the Governor-General might feel necessary, for protection of the Maharaja's interests.

The Treaty of Bhairowal, thus, rang the death-knell of the Sikh power, and it "made the British the real masters of the Punjab."
Death-knell
of Sikh
Power

In fact after signing the treaty, Hardinge himself wrote to Henry Lawrence on October 23, 1847: "In all

¹ H. to C., Dec. IV, 1846, P. & R. I., Poona Records.

In atters

our measures, taken during the minority, we must bear in mind that by the Treaty of Lahore, March, 1846, the Punjab never was intended to be an independent State. By the clause, I added, the chief of State can neither make war nor peace, nor exchange nor sell an acre of territory, nor admit an European officer, nor, in fact, perform any act without our permission. In fact, the native prince is in fatters, and our protection, and must do our bidding.¹"

The British intentions are clear.

1. Quoted in Edwardes and Merivale, *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence*, (London, 1872), ii, p. 100—101.

CHAPTER XVI

The Second Anglo—Sikh War

A—The Causes

Six months after his appointment as Resident in Lahore, wrote Henry Lawrence: "I can certify to this people having settled down in a manner that could never have been hoped or believed of them." And in January 1848, when Lord Hardinge left for England, he assured Lord Dalhousie, his successor, that so far as human foresight could predict, "it would not be necessary to fire a gun in India for seven years to come¹." But it was not long before Hardinge's prediction proved incorrect.

The Second Anglo—Sikh war started in 1848, and it ended in 1849 with the final annexation of the Punjab territories to the British Empire in India. It would be interesting to have a glance over the factors leading to this catastrophe.

I—The Sikh Population.

Though "the population of the Punjab as a whole began to appreciate the advantages of living under an orderly and just administration, the Sikhs themselves welcomed the new order of things with anything but enthusiasm. They felt that their position as the ruling community was being undermined. British methods of government might be superior to their own, but they did not want British methods, and the more popular these became the deeper grew their jealousy and resentment. Moreover the Hindu

Incorrect prediction

Causes

Sikhs undermined

1. Bosworth Smith, 'Life of Lord Lawrence', i. p. 214, ed. 1885.

Not collectors

Equality ?

Social reforms

Defeat

A chance

and Muhammadan communities derived greater benefit than they did from the reforms that were being instituted. Many of the more well-to-do Sikhs lived on rent-free lands, and it made no difference to them whether rates of assessment were high or low, unless they happened to be collectors of revenue, and then they preferred them to be high. Muhammadans and Hindus they were accustomed to regard as mere producers of revenue—not as fellow-subjects entitled to equal rights with themselves. Equality within the limits of the Khalsa was a doctrine which every Sikh was prepared to uphold, but the equality of all communities within the limits of the Punjab was the worst form of heresy¹.

Moreover the British social reforms such as suppression of Sati system and that of female infanticide were regarded by all as an interference in their religious practices, and this was the last thing which any one among them would tolerate. Little wonder, therefore, that they considered the English hold on Punjab with anything but sympathy.

II—The Sikh Soldiers.

Nor did the Sikh soldiers take their defeat as anything more than a matter of chance. Thus writes Cunningham: While the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief remained at Lahore at the head of twenty thousand men, portions of the Sikh army came to the capital to be paid up and disbanded. The Soldiers showed neither despondency of mutinous rebels nor the effrontery and indifference of mercenaries, and their manly deportment added lustre to that valour which the victors had dearly felt and generously extolled. The men talked of their defeat as the chance of war²...."

1. Payne, pp. 190–191.

2. Cunningham, p. 289.

Moreover, even if some felt the Khalsa having been defeated, the treachery of their leaders was considered to be the only cause, but for which they should have taught the English a bitter lesson.

- They had a full confidence in the future of the Khalsa. The Khalsa, they would say amid their humiliation, was just a child; and as the commonwealth of the Sikhs grew into youth, they were bound to be clothed by Guru Govind Singh with victory. And the time was not far ahead, when the Khalsa would reassert itself and thus rule the world.

Then the disbanded soldiers, although they had been paid their arrears by the Darbar, had not all been guided into peaceful employments; 'Many of these had, it is true, settled down to peaceful pursuits; but there was still a large number of them who were, as Lawrence himself described it, "afloat on the surface of society." These men lived by methods which were by no means facilitated by the growth of law and order, and every measure which tended to promote public security increased their discontent.¹

And when these unemployed soldiers moved from village to village without an aim or idea, no welcome was accorded to them. They rather met taunts 'Tusi Khalsa ji purian pa aye', which could never be palatable to those who had seen the age of chivalry under the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh. If another chance for trial of strength with the British came, it would naturally be welcome.

III—The Lahore Chiefs.

Some of the Lahore chiefs too had their own dissatisfaction. Their "object was not to compromise themselves with the English by destroying an isolated division

Treachery

Confidence

Rule word

Disbanded
soldiers

Upbraided

Not satisfied

I. Payne, p. 191.

Lal Singh

but to get their own troops dispersed by the covering forces of their opponents. Their desire was to be upheld as the ministers of a dependent kingdom by greatful conquerors," writes Cunningham. But the prize they got by playing treachery and getting their own countrymen slaughtered, was any thing but satisfactory. Lal Singh, thus for instance, had been appointed as Prime Minister of the Punjab. But he looked with jealousy at the prize which Gulab Singh had been able to wrest. The ink on the Treaty of Lahore had not thus dried, when he began to intrigue against the British.

Jindan
dis-satisfied

Nor could Maharani Jindan be satisfied with the present arrangement. She had not been very anxious to continue the stay of the British forces at Lahore beyond the date stipulated in the Treaty of Lahore for their withdrawal. She was, therefore, not consulted when the Treaty of Bhairowal was signed. After the signing of the treaty, a strict watch was kept upon her movements. And although she might not have actually taken a part in some conspiracy against the British, their developing hold on her country was hardly a thing she could like.

IV—The British.

Not annexed

After the First Anglo Sikh War, no effort had been made by Hardinge to annex the Punjab. Appreciating his policy, thus wrote Sir Robert Peel, the British Prime Minister, to him: "It is ten times more gratifying to the public mind than the annexation of the whole of the Punjab would have been.

Reasons

"...They consider that the annexation of the Punjab would have been a source of weakness and not of strength, that it would have extended our frontier at the greatest distance from our resources and on the weakest points, that you would have been with reference to Afghanistan and all the bordering countries in a much worse position than you were in September last.

"These are Indian considerations; there are higher considerations still nearer home.....There is not a country in Europe or America.....that does not admire the signal proof of bravery and military skill ten times the more,.....because it has been followed by dignified forbearance and moderation in the hour of strength¹."

But by the time Dalhousie succeeded Hardinge in India, the situation had changed. The British studied the Punjab more closely, and they were convinced that the annexation of the Punjab was after all not a liability. It was a paying proposition. It would not be a source of weakness, but that of strength. The hardy and robust Sikhs if recruited into the British forces and trained under the European methods, could bring victories to the British in any part of the world. And moreover, the Punjab, organising its resources efficiently, was a surplus State, and not deficit one.

Situation changed

Thus writes Dr. Ganda Singh : "The cotton of the Punjab was one of the chief attractions to the British who foresaw in the Land of five rivers a favourable market for the consumption of their goods. While Amritsar offered the prospects of an enterepot for the Punjab and the hill territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Multan and Peshawar promised to become advanced depots for British trade in Afghanistan and in regions beyond the Oxus.

Source of strength

"The Punjab also offered vast opportunities of employment for a large number of British civilians and politcals with handsome salaries, allowances, furloughs and pensions. It also offered facilities of extensive cantonments and mountainous training-grounds for the British troops.²" No wonder, therefore, the annexationists

And employ-
ment

1. Charles, Second Viscount Hardinge, 'Viscount Hardinge', pp. 143—44.

2. Dr. Ganda Singh, 'Private correspondence Relating to The Anglo-Sikh Wars', p. 165.

among the British became more vocal. Dalhousie himself being one of them.

Dalhousie
annexa-
tionist

"The fact was that Lord Dalhousie's arrival initiated a change in the whole policy and methods of the supreme Government. Able, energetic, resolute, and entirely self-confident, he was a born autocrat; to whom it seemed obvious that the extension of the British rule was necessarily for the benefit of the ruled;....."¹ He was perfectly convinced that it was better to annex the country and be its master, than use it only as a buffer State against Afghanistan, and to stave off invasions from the north-west. He was also convinced of the possibility of training the Sikhs, which had been considered difficult in the time of Hardinge.

Extermi-
nated Sikhs

After his arrival in India, a policy of ruthless extermination of the Sikhs, rather than of pacifying them was started. All key positions one after another, were given over to the English.

A salvation

The more honest and less of imperialistic spirit among the British, too had an excuse for annexation. They always considered themselves to be a superior civilisation, and as Lawrence wrote : "The arrival of British functionaries in this remote and hitherto neglected portion of the Empire may be considered its salvation." The annexation of the Punjab could therefore be a social job, done less from any selfish motive and more from a desire to develop the backward country. Little did, however, they understand the national spirit for independence and self-rule and an apathy for the 'white man's burden,' in the country they desired to annex.

1. Gongh, p. 262

Maharani Jindan was suspected of having intrigued against the British at Lahore. No trial was held, and no charges were communicated to her, but she was retired to her country palace of Sheikhopur. Even if the Rani had intrigued at Lahore, thus writes Evans Bell, "in her compulsory retirement at the country palace of Sheikhopur, her evil influence was almost extinguished; and in May 1848, one of the most mischievous plots carried on in her name having been exposed and defeated, and the chief conspirators publicly executed, she would have been powerless, if left to her own devices.¹" But not being satisfied, from Sheikhopur she was sent in exile to Benaras in the most humiliating condition. By the Treaty of Bhairowal, she was to get an annuity of Rs. 1½ lakhs. On her removal to Sheikhopur, the annuity was reduced in August 1847 to Rs. 48,000, and when she was sent in exile to Benaras, it was further reduced to a mere sum of Rs. 12,000. Besides, she was dispossessed of much of her jewellery. Number of attendants upon her was considerably reduced and a strict watch was kept upon her movements.

The effect of such harsh treatment towards the widow of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was instantaneous. The Resident himself wrote: "The reports from Raja Sher Singh's camp are, that the Khalsa soldiery, on hearing of the removal of the Maharanee were much disturbed.²" This was looked upon by all, writes Bell "as a national insult, and as a preliminary step to the dethronement of her son, and the destruction of the State³."

Even Dost Muhammad of Afghanistan was moved by such a treatment meted out to Jindan, and he remarked that "such a treatment is objectionable to all creeds, and both high and low prefer death⁴."

Jindan
treated
badly,

Khalsa
disturbed

1. Evans Bell, 'Annexation of the Punjab', p. 13.

2. Punjab Paper, 1849, pp. 263, 266.

3. Bell p. 20.

4. Punjab Papers, 1847—9. p. 518.

Chuttur
Singh

The child Maharaja Dalip Singh had been betrothed to the daughter of Sardar Chuttur Singh, the Nazim of Hazara District. When he heard of the treatment meted out to Jindan, and when rumours got afloat regarding the intentions of the British, the mind of Chuttur Singh was naturally exercised. In order to apply a test whether the British were sincere in their intentions or were bent upon annexing the Punjab, he wrote to his son Sher Singh to go to the Resident forthwith and ask him to fix a date for Dalip Singh's marriage. Sher Singh met Lieutenant Edwards in this connection, and Edwards advised the Resident that since rumours regarding the British intention to annex the Punjab had gone abroad, "it would, I think, be a wise and timely measure to give such public assurance of British good faith, and intention to adhere to the Treaty, as would be involved in authoritative preparations for providing the young Maharaja with a Queen¹."

But the Resident returned only a very stiff official reply to this application, which just naturally, strengthened the doubts in the minds of the Sardars yet further.

Just this time, Chuttur Singh himself fell into very strait circumstances. The Multan outbreak which immediately led to the clash, had occurred by this time. Captain Abbot, one of the Assistants of the Resident, had been appointed to advise and aid Chuttur Singh in his administration of the Hazara District. When an outbreak took place at Multan, Captain Abbot somehow got himself convinced that Chuttur Singh himself was at the head of a conspiracy to march on Lahore, and from that time, he removed his residence about 35 miles from that of the Sardar.

A test

Stiff reply

Abbot's
policy

1. Punjab Papers, 1847-9, p. 271.

Regarding Captain Abbot, Sir Henry Lawrence had remarked some time back to the Governor-General: "Captain Abbott is an excellent officer; but he is too apt to take gloomy views of a question.¹" And here too, as the Resident later wrote, Abbott's constant suspicion "seems to have, not unnaturally, estranged that chief (Chuttur Singh) from him." Although before this, remarks Evans Bell, "Nothing whatever appears to have proved that Sirdar Chuttur Singh promoted or approved the misconduct of the evil-disposed among the Sikh troops."²

Character
of Abbott

Yet being, convinced of Chuttur Singh's conspiracy, Abbott not only removed his residence at a distance, but he also began to rouse the armed Mahomedan peasantry of Hazara, who could hardly love to be ruled by a Sikh, against the Nazim. The peasantry thus incited, revolted and surrounded Harripur, where Chuttur Singh resided. Chuttur Singh had no option but to defend himself, and he ordered Col. Canora, an American officer in his service, to take a particular position for defence. But he too had fallen under Captain Abbott's influence, and not only he refused to comply with the order of the Sardar, loading two of his guns, one in each of his hands, he rather declared that he would shoot the first man who came near him. On this, two companies of Sikh infantry were sent against him, and he was shot down, after one or two of the Sikh soldiers themselves had been shot by him.

Peasantry
roused

Abbott in his letter to the Resident, called this a cold-blooded murder,³ but the Resident wrote in reply: "I can not at all agree with you as to the character you assign to this transaction.....Taking the worst possible view of the case, I now not how you can characterise it as a cold-blooded murder."⁴

Col. Conora
refused

Cold-blooded

1. Punjab Papers, p. 30.

2. Bell, p. 25.

3. Punjab Papers, 1849, p. 313.

Goaded

The shot had however, been fired. If Chuttur Singh had planned no revolt, he was goaded into one. He had been offered no explanations, and he considered Abbott's attitude to be the attitude of the British government towards him.

"The insurrection in Hazara was, infact, originally an insurrection of the Mohammedan peasantry, with the object of exterminating the Sikh troops and Governor, instigated and promoted by a British officer."¹

Thus when Chuttur Singh was committed beyond possibility of retreat, his son Sher Singh had no option but to join him. Payne writes: "Sher Singh, with the whole of the Sikh contingent, went over to the side of Mularj ...If any doubt yet remained as to the real significance of the Multan outbreak, it was effectually dispelled."² Payne means to prove that Sher Singh had some conspiracy with Mulraj before the outbreak of Multan occurred. But this is wrong. The Multan outbreak had occurred in the beginning of March 1848, but as late as on 23rd September, the resident himself wrote that "Raja Sher Singh's conduct has been very extraordinary, and is almost inexplicable."³ And Edwards, an Assistant to the Resident, wrote that when Sher Singh was sent to suppress Multan rebellion, he worked with the best intentions. And later when Sher Singh wanted to go over to Mulraj, the latter rather distrusted him as an agent of the British, and Sher Singh had to become leader of a new rebellion.

The Multan outbreak.

The immediate cause of the Second Anglo-Sikh war was however the outbreak at Multan. Dewan Sawan Mal the Governor of Multan died, and when his own son Mul Raj succeeded him, a succession fee of Rs. 30 lakhs was

Sher Singh joined

Immediate cause
Mulraj

1. Bell, p. 28.

2. Payne, p. 199.

(3) Punjab Papers, 1849, p. 348.

demanded from him, which he having refused, troops under Bhagwan Singh, the brother of Raja Lal Singh, were sent in 1841 to realise the sum. The troops were defeated, but still the district of Jhang was wrested from him and given over to Bhagwan Singh. Not satisfied, an increase in revenue from Multan, payment of arrears and the rendering of old accounts was proposed, hearing of which, Mulraj came to Lahore, and submitted his resignation to the acting Resident Sir John Lawrence, his brother Henry having gone on leave. John, however, persuaded him to continue for another year, and promised to keep his resignation a profound secret from the Darbar."

Resignation
not accepted

Shortly after, however, a violent change took place in the situation. On March 6, 1848, Frederick Currie reached Lahore as a new Resident, of whom thus writes Major Basu: "He was perhaps appointed to the Residency at Lahore to provoke the Sikhs to hostilities and thus hasten the annexation of Punjab." John had written to his brother Henry just before Currie's arrival, that the "Government has just written to me to do nothing about Multan till Currie comes," which means some change in the approach was contemplated.

Currie new
Resident

This proved correct. John had persuaded Mulraj to continue, but Currie on his arrival, revived the question and accepting the resignation, sent Kahn Singh, accompanied by two British officers namely, P. A. Vans Agnew and Lt. W. A. Anderson to take charge from Mulraj. According to J. C. Marshman, "Moolraj had always been regarded by the British authorities, and particularly by Mr. John Lawrence, as a fair specimen of an Asiatic ruler, and Mr. Agnew remarked on his arrival, that the quiet aspect of Multan had not belied the accounts which he had heard of its excellent order and arrangement."¹"

New gover-
nor accept-
edMulraj fair
specimen

1. Calcutta Review, Dec. 1843, p. 241.

British officers murdered

Kahn Singh and the two British officers reached Multan on April 18, and the new Governor was formally installed in the office in the Multan fort on 19th. But while returning from the fort to their camp, the British officers, whose presence infuriated some Sikh sepoys, were suddenly attacked at the gate of the fort and were severely wounded. They, however, with the help of the men of Kahn Singh, were able to escape to a neighbouring mosque. This was a signal for outbreak. A party was sent to bring back Mulraj who had just galloped off the city, and was forced to lead the rebellion at the risk of his life. He joined the rebels, but despite his efforts to save the British officers, the rebels turned the guns of the fort on the mosque and shortly after, the two British officers were murdered.

Mulraj defeated

Here was a welcome chance for the annexationists. Message had reached Lt. Edwards, officer-in-charge of Derajat, who with Gen. Cortland from Bannu and some loyal troops of the Nawab of Bhawalpur, marched against Mulraj, who was defeated in two pitched battles, after which he shut himself up in the fort.

Delay

Lt. Edwards sent an urgent call for additional troops and seige guns to the Resident, but Lord Gough, the Commander-in-Chief delayed the action studiously, and sent a force only in August when the Multan outbreak had spread whole over the Punjab. The seige of the fort began on 5th. September. On 14th September, Sher Singh with whole of his Sikh contingent, having failed in joining hands with Mulraj, became leader of a new rebellion. Chuttur Singh, his father, raised a standard of revolt in Hazara, and thus was the Second Anglo-Sikh war supposed have started.

Rebellion of Sher Singh

V—The war

Sher Singh's offer to join hands with Mulraj having been refused, he set out from Multan on October 9, and proceeding northwards with his whole force along the right bank of the Chenab, early in November, he reached Ramnagar, where he entrenched himself waiting for the arrival of the Bannu troops. It was here that the opening action of this war took place.

On the British side, the grand army of the Punjab assembled at Ferozepur early in November 1848 and Lord Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief reached Lahore on the 13th, wherefrom he marched towards Ramnagar on the 16th. No declaration of war against the Punjab had so far been made by the British Government and even on 15th November Lord Gough did not know whether he had come in the Punjab to fight some a refractory chief who might have revolted against the Punjab Government, or to fight the Punjab Government itself. As he wrote on that date : "I do not know whether we are at peace or war, or who it is we are fighting for."¹

With his 20,000 men and 100 guns, Lord Gough attacked Sher Singh's position at Ramnagar on 22nd. Both sides suffered but the attackers more heavily among their killed being Lieutenant-Colonel Havelock and Brigadier-General Cureton. The attack "served no useful purpose."²

On December 3, another indecisive engagement having been fought at Sadullapur, the Sikhs withdrew from the Chenab and took up a strong position at Rassul, on the banks of the river Jhelum, which commanded a road along which Chuttur Singh was to come with his division.

Sher Singh

Gough
reached
Lahore

Ramnagar

Sadullapur

1. Life and Campaigns of Hugh Viscount Gough, ii, p. 178.

2. Lt.—Colonel Burton, 'The First and Second Anglo-Sikh Wars', p. 84.

The British forces also having crossed the Chenab, halted at Hela, 15 miles from Rassul, where after waiting for five weeks in the vain hope that the fall of Multan would enable General Whish soon to join him, he decided to attack the Sikh position before Chuttur Singh could effect a junction with his son.

The Battle of Chelian wala.

British lost more heavily

The forces of the two sides met at Chelianwala on January 13, 1849. The battle started in the afternoon, and the fight continued till the end of the day, lasting for a little more than three hours. The loss on both the sides was tremendous, and each side claimed victory. But writes Nolan, "the advantages gained were altogether on the part of the Sikhs." According to Lionel James Trotter, on the side of the British, "thirty-three officers, fifty-three sergeants or havildars, five hundred and eleven common soldiers had fallen dead, a hundred men and four sergeants were missing, few of whom returned alive; while the wounded came up to ninety-four officers, one warrant officer, ninety sergeants or havildars, and fourteen hundred and sixty-six men of other ranks. Besides this fearful loss, unequalled in the record of Indian battles, four guns belonging to the troops of Huish and Christie, and five or six colours borne by the 24th foot, the 25th, 30th, 56th, native infantry, remaining in enemy's hands."¹

The news

"When the news of Chelianwala reached England, the nation was stricken with profound emotion. A long series of military successes had ill fitted it to hear with composure of British guns and British standards taken, of British cavalry flying before the enemy, and of a

1. History of the British Empire in India, i, p. 186.

British army scarcely able by the most desperate exertions to snatch a victory from a wild Indian people. And the disaster was attributed very generally to the blunders of the Commander-in-Chief.¹"

Lord Dalhousie lost his confidence in Lord Gough, and thus wrote to Sir John Hobhouse on February 21 : "if he again fights an incomplete action with terrible carnage as before, you must expect to hear of my taking a strong step; he shall not remain in command of that army in the field."²"

Lost
confidence

The Battle of Gujrat

It was on 24th January that Chuttur Singh joined Sher Singh. On the British side, a royal salute announced the fall of Multan two days later. There being heavy and continuous rain after Chelianwala, further operations were not resumed for some days. During the night of February 11, the Sikhs evacuated Rassul, and passing round the flank of the British army, they moved off eastwards, apparently to cross the Chenab and march on Lahore. General Whish had reached Ramnagar from Multan by this time; and learning of Sher Singh's movements, he sent Colonel Byrne with a brigade to prevent him from crossing the river at Wazirabad. Byrne was just in time before the Sikhs could reach Chenab, who finding the fords guarded withdrew to Gujrat. On 21st February, uniting with the division of Whish, Lord Gough marched the main army to give the Sikhs a battle.

Chuttur
Singh joined

March on
Lahore
checked

"Reinforced by Chuttur Singh and 1,500 Afghans under the son of Dost Muhammad, Sher Singh was now at the head of 40,000 men with 60 guns. Lord Gough's force

1. Ep. of Anglo-Indian Hist., pp. 228—29.

2. Rait, 'Life of Lord Dalhousie', i, pp. 211—13.

British
superior
artillery

numbered only 25,000, but for the first time since the commencement of the Sikh war he was superior to his opponent in artillery, having at his disposal the powerful eighteen-pounders which had been brought up from Bombay to the siege of Multan.¹" And though the Sikh gunners fought "in quickness of fire surpassing, in truth of aim very nearly equaling, the world-famous artillery-men of Bengal and Bombay,²" they failed against the more numerous and heavier guns of their assailants.

Sikhs routed

The action began at 7.30 A. M. and at 1 P. M., the British were in complete possession of Sher Singh's camp, "while the cavalry on both flanks were in hot pursuit of the now utterly routed army of the Khalsas.... The Sikhs made no attempt to rally; and at Rawalpindi, on March 12, Sher Singh and all that was left of his broken army came in and surrendered. Thirty-five chiefs laid down their swords at Gilbert's feet; and afterwards the Sikh soldiers, advancing one by one, flung each his arms on a heap in front of the general's tent.³"

The scene

"I never saw," thus runs the subaltern's diary, "anything like the reluctance with which they seemed to part with their weapons. Many of them were fine grey-haired old fellows, with large flowing white beards, probably some of Ranjit Singh's veterans. One old fellow I noticed in particular: he stood for a long time looking wistfully at his arms and the pile before him, and evidently could not make up his mind to give them up. At last the officer on duty came up and touched him on the shoulder, and ordered him to move on; he then threw down his sword and matchlock with a crash, and turned away saying, with tears in his eyes, 'All my

1. Payne, pp. 206—7.

2. Trotter, i, p. 195.

3. Payne, pp. 207—8.

work is done now.¹" Another writer thus says, the Sikh soldiers kissed their swords and laid them down with tears in eyes, exclaiming "Ajj Ranjit Singh mar gaya—To-day is Ranjit Singh dead!"

"After they had deposited their weapons, they went away—goodness knows where probably without a farthing in their pockets to buy food with."²

Mar gaya

Went away

Leaves from the journal of a Subaltern, p. 189, quoted by Payne, p. 208.

1. Leaves from the journal of a Subaltern, p. 189, quoted by Payne, p. 208.

2. Ibid.

"The Sikhs and their leaders have wholly repudiated their former oaths. They have chosen their British masters over their former rulers. [A] multitude, more or less
"Lahore, March 29th"

CHAPTER XVII

The Annexation.

Darbar at Lahore

A proclamation was read

On March 29, 1849, a Darbar was held at Lahore by Sir Henry Elliot, the Foreign Secretary, under the orders of the Governor-General. "It was attended by the boy-Maharaja, seated, for the last time, on the throne of his ancestors, and all the Sikh chiefs then present in the capital, while the proceedings were watched by a vast concourse of spectators. Amidst a deep silence, the proclamation of the Annexation of the Punjab was read aloud in English, Persian, and Hindustani. In the equally deep silence which followed, a paper was then handed by Tej Singh to the Maharaja, containing the conditions on which he and his chiefs might assure themselves of generous treatment at the hands of their conquerors. The paper was immediately signed by Dalip Singh, after which Sir Henry Elliot rose and left the hall. As he did so the British flag was hoisted on the ramparts of the citadel, and the booming of guns announced that the kingdom of Lahore had ceased to exist¹."

The child Maharaja was granted a pension of £50,000 a year, with a permission to reside anywhere in the British territory, except in Purjab. The last act of submission of the Maharaja was the surrender to the British Government of the Koh-i-nur.

The proclamation of the Governor-General ran thus:

"The Sikh people and their chiefs have, on their part grossly and faithlessly violated the promises by which they were bound. Of their annual tribute no portion what

Sikhs blamed

1. Payne, p. 212.

ever has at any time been paid and large loans advanced to them by the Government of India have never been paid. The control of the British Government to which they voluntarily submitted themselves, has been resisted by arms. Peace has been cast aside. British officers have been murdered when acting for the State; others engaged in a like employment have been thrown into captivity. Finally, the whole of the State and the whole Sikh people, joined by many of the Sardars in the Punjab, who signed the treaties, and by a member of the Regency itself, have risen in arms against us and have waged a fierce and bloody war for the proclaimed purpose of destroying the British and their power.....

"The Government has no desire for conquest now, but it is bound in its duty to provide fully for its own security and to guard the interests of those committed to its charge." And for all this, the Governor-General ^{And Punjab annexed} "hereby proclaims, that the kingdom of the Punjab is at an end."¹

Besides in the proclamation, the arguments forwarded by Dalhousie for the annexation of the Punjab, are available in several state documents, and ultimately he was convinced, as he asserted, that "there never will be peace in the Punjab as long as its people are allowed to retain the means and opportunity of making war. There never can be now any guarantee for the tranquility of India, until we shall have effected the entire subjection of the Sikh people, and destroyed its power as an independent nation."²

Lord Dalhousie is supported by certain writers. Thus writes W. W. Hunter: "Lord Hardinge at the end of the first Punjab War in 1846, tried, as we have seen, an intermediate method of ruling the province by British officers for the benefit of the infant prince. This method had

Action supported

1. Latif, pp. 572—3.

2. See Arnold, 'Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration', i, pp. 205—219, ed. 1862.

failed. It produced, what many had foreseen it would produce, a period of perpetual intrigue, ending in a general insurrection.¹" The only alternative, therefore, was annexation.

Latif writes. "The British Government of India had throughout acted with the utmost forbearance and moderation in their relations with the Sikh Darbar, and the policy of the Governor-General had from the outset, been wholly unaggressive, and entirely free from any taint of greed or ambition.....But the sinking fortunes of the Sikhs prevented that noble policy from being appreciated, and every endeavour made to give it effect proved unavailing."²"

And
condemned

But the annexation of the Punjab has not been universally applauded. Thus according to Duke of Argyll, "there is no need to defend it in point of right, and as little need now to support it in respect to policy."³ Napier called Dalhousie 'the Lard of Cockpen,' and 'a young Scotch lord, with no head for governing an Empire.'⁴ "To offer any vindication of a measure which even the most prejudiced of Lord Dalhousie's opponents have not ventured to impugn," thus writes J. C. Marshman, "would be altogether redundant." Sir Henry Lawrence opposed annexation and even members of the British Cabinet in England swallowed it only with a pinch of salt.

A critical
review

It would be interesting, however, to have a short critical review of the question to form our own view.

1. 'The Marquess of Dalhausie,' p. 79.

(a) Latif, pp 572—3.

2. Latif, ii, pp 571—572.

3. 'India under Dalhosie and Canning,' p. 4.

4. See Gough, p. 268.

To start with, the attention of the reader may be drawn to one of the Articles of the Agreement of December 16, 1846, by which the British Government undertook "The maintenance of an administration, and protection of the Maharaja Dalip Singh during the minority of his Highness." And for this Governor-General was given supreme and plenary powers, and was at liberty to occupy with the British soldiers, as he might think fit any fort or any part of the country.

(1) Under-
took protec-
tion

Further, as Hardinge declared on December 21, 1846, the Council of Regency, composed of the leading chiefs of the Punjab, would be under complete control of the Resident, who could at his will, introduce any change in it, dismiss a member and appoint another in his place. And in 1847, the Resident himself wrote: "On the whole the Durbar" (The Council of Regency) 'gives me as much support as I reasonably expect;.....(they) refer most questions to me, and in words at least allow, more fully even than I wish, that they are only executive officers,—to do as they are bid¹.'

Council of
Regency
under
control

That the Lahore Darbar, or the Council of Regency, worked as completely sub-servient to the Resident even till atleast as late as February 1849, is proved in the following extracts from Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Lahore and the Akhbar i-Multan, quoted in a paper published in the Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission, Vol. XXI, pp. 43—46.

Did the
bidding

"Diwan Mulraj and later on, Sardar Chatar Singh and his sons.....etc., who had taken up arms against the British in the Punjab, were looked down upon and declared as mufsid, or mischief-makers; their houses were searched by the officials of the Darbar and their property confiscated to the State²"

Mulraj con-
demned

1. Punjab Papers, 1849, p. 32.

2. Akh. Lahore, Oct., 1—3, 4—9, 1848

Food supplied

"Food and fodder were regularly supplied by the servants of the Darbar to the British regiments moving from their cantonments into the Punjab for the suppression of the disturbances in the country.¹"

Chuttar Singh

"The Lahore Darbar ordered Sardar Gulab Singh, son of the 'rebel' Sardar Chatar Singh, to convey personally to his father a copy of the Governor-General Lord Dalhousie's letter saying that if any harm came to the lives of the British officers in Peshawar and Hazara, it would be avenged with the blood of the sons of the Sardar, one of whom, the above Sardar Gulab Singh, was then in Lahore.²"

Gough received

"On the arrival of the British Commander-in-Chief at Lahore on November 13, 1848, Maharaja Daleep Singh and the chiefs of the Lahore Darbar received him with all the usual friendly formalities and presents, and fired a salute of 17 guns in his honour. In the course of conversation, Sir Hugh Gough told the Resident that their object was the protection and management (hifazt-o-bandobast) of the kingdom of the Maharajah, in addition to the encouragement of his friends and supporters and the suppression of the rebels.³"

The object

"As desired by the Resident, the Lahore Darbar fired 12 guns to celebrate the victory of Multan⁴"

Victory of Multan

Still blamed

Dalip Singh was thus a British ward, and the Punjab Government completely in the control of the Resident. Yet justifying the annexation, Dalhousie alleged that the Government of Lahore neither punished Mulraj "nor gave reparation for the offence." The questions arise, who controlled the Government of Lahore? And who was

1. Bkh. Lahore, Oct. 21—24, 1848.

2. Ibid. Nov. 1848.

3. Akh., Nov. 13, 1848.

4. Ibid. January 25, 1849.

responsible for the suppression of the refractory chiefs ? Clearly by the terms of the Treaty, it was the duty of the British and not that of their ward or anybody else to do the job. The Lahore Darbar was only to give its co-operation and that it did.

Then again. The Multan outbreak occurred in April 1848, where as to suppress it the British troops reached there only in August, after the lapse of four months. The excuse forwarded by Lord Gough was that, it being hot weather, it would not be feasible to risk a large army in an action till after the rains. But this seems to be a lame excuse. Edward Lake wrote to Currie on August 14, 1848 : "As for the weather, nothing can be more agreeable and pleasant than it is now. The nights are really quite cold and the day are not disagreeable."

Moreover, as Edwards addressed Major Hodson on May 24, 1848, "Postpone a rebellion ! was ever such a thing heard of in any Government ?"

"It is difficult also," thus writes Sir William Hunter, "to refrain from censure of the inability to move which the Commander-in-Chief betrayed during that period, in spite of the two great camps of nine thousand men apiece at Lahore and Ferozepur—camps standing in readiness to march at a day's notice."¹

The truth seems to be that the Government of India was determined to let the small rebellion in Multan, spread whole over the Punjab, then declare it to be the rebellion of the Punjab and the Lahore Darbar against the British, throw a powerful conquering army, and annex the State to the British empire in India. Or as S. S. Thorburn writes : "The Government of India had decided to the

(2) The
Delay

Never heard
of

Govern-
ment's
policy

1. 'Marquess of Dalhousie,' p. 74.

Punjab abscess come to a head, and when ripe to lance it freely in the coming cold weather.¹"

Chiefs incited

In the meanwhile, no stone seems to have been left un-turned, to incite rebellions and uprisings in the country. Maharani Jindan was forced into exile in humiliating conditions, Chuttur Singh's proposal for the marriage of Dalip Singh was rejected, and rather such a situation was created at Hazara, thanks to the efforts of Captain Abbot, that Chuttur Singh had no alternative but to revolt. Sher Singh who had been so honest and loyal in his dealings with the British, was likewise goaded into joining hands with Chuttur Singh, his father.² And then the Governor-General declared in his proclamation so innocently that, "the whole of the State and the whole Sikh people, joined by many of the sardars in the Punjab, who signed the treaties, and by a member of the Regency it self, have waged a fierce and bloody war for the proclaimed purpose of destroying the British and their power."

Still not all
joined

Yet the truth is, that out of the 16 sardars who signed the treaties, only five joined the rebellion. Out of the eight members of the Council of Regency, six remained faithful, one was suspected, and only one, namely Sher Singh, joined the rebellion, and that when the British themselves had left him with no alternative but this.

Many
soldiers,

Nor did "the whole of the State and the whole Sikh people," and the army of the State take field against the British. It was only a small fraction of the army in the south-eastern and north-western part of the Punjab, which deserted. The troops under the command of Sihekh Imam-ud-Din, Sardar Jhanda Singh, Colonel Bhup Singh,

1. Punjab in Peace and War, (London, 1904) p. 101; See also Trotter, 'The History of the British Empire in India,' i, p. 134

2. See Chapter; The causes of the Second Sikh War.

and chiefs
loyal

General Cortland, Sardar Fateh Singh, Missar Sahib Dyal, Diwan Jawahar Mal, Colonel Bahadur Singh, Colonel Budh Singh, General Sultan Mahmud, Babu Pandey and Colonel Nur-ud-Din etc, rather remained obedient even till the end, under the orders of the Lahore Darbar. And in addition to this, writes Evans Bell, "at least 20,000 subjects of the Lahore State enrolled in its service, fought on the side of the Government, and assisted in suppressing the rebellion."

And the outbreak of Multan itself seems to have been only accidental and unpremeditated. At the time Mulraj had not been enjoying a good health. He was without children and unhappy and even unpopular with his own army. The Resident himself says of him, just before the out break, Mulraj had "only five or six field guns,"¹ and had even "discharged almost all his regular troops, preparatory to resigning his Government."² And even Dalhousie himself could not help remarking once that "the first outbreak was unpremeditated, and, in a manner, accidental."³

Multan out-break unpre-meditated

Moreover, prior to handing over the charge, Mulraj had disbanded his troops thus causing misery to many a family, for which according to those thus thrown into unemployment, the British themselves were responsible. The man who attacked the British officers was himself most probably brooding over his probable dismissal, after the new Governor had taken over the charge, and his attack, therefore, was an expression only of his personal discontentment, which later developed into a general outbreak, forcing Mulraj into it as well, at the risk of his life.

Unemploy-
ment

1. Punjab Papers, 1849, p. 133.

2. Ibid. p. 371.

3. Ibid. p. 584.

Mulraj and his father revolted under Sikhs

And yet more. Dewan Mulraj was not a Sikh. His father Sawan Mal and he himself, had governed Multan for over thirty years, repeatedly defying the Lahore power even before the British. And even if Mulraj did so once again, his action was nothing new, and he should have been suppressed as hitherto he and his father had been. And this should have been done by the British themselves who were the legal guardians and protectors of Dalip Singh and his territories.

Still the British declared

It is clear thus from the above arguments, the outbreaks in the Punjab were not of general order, only a few of the Sardars revolted, great many of them and great majority of the soldiers, remained loyal to the British even till the end of the campaign. It is fallacious therefore to assert that whole of the State, the Sikhs and the Sardars revolted against the British. Thus did Herbert Edwards' declare openly to Major Hodson, the Political Assistant of the British Resident, in his letter of May 24, 1848 :

Unjust and inexpedient

"You express a hope in your letter that the British Government will act for itself, and not prop up a fallen dynasty. In other words, you hope we shall seize the opportunity to annex the Punjab. In this I cannot agree with you, for I think, for all that has yet happened, it would be both unjust and inexpedient. The treaty we made with the Sikh Government and people cannot be forfeited by the treachery of a Gorkha regiment in Multan, the rebellion of a discharged kardar or the treasonable intrigues of the queen-mother, who has no connection with the Government of her son."

(3) A clear treachery

On 18th November, 1848, a Proclamation was issued, and confirmed by Lord Dalhousie on December 14; and the declaration made in this proclamation was confirmed in another proclamation issued on February 5, 1849, which clearly laid down that, the troops entering into

the Punjab under Lord Gough, were not doing so "as an enemy to the constituted Government." Still, however, he had already written to the Resident on October 3, 1848: "The Governor-General considers the State of Lahore to be, to all intents and purposes, directly at war with the British Government.¹" Nothing short of a clear treachery and deception, hardly befitting a man of that stature and an empire so great.

Further in January 1849, the Governor-General wrote to Amir Dost Mohamad of Afghanistan, "the Province of Peshawar is a portion of the territories of Maharajah Dalip Singh, and by the provisions of treaty, is subject, during the minority of his Highness, to the control and direction of the British Government." Thus question naturally arises, if the Province of Peshawar was under the control and direction of the British Government, was not the same position occupied by the Province of Multan as well? If it was the duty of the British to protect Dalip Singh against any attack at Peshawar, it was their duty to protect him against an outbreak at Multan as well.

(4) Protection, a duty

The proclamation runs: "Of their annual tribute no portion whatever has at any time been paid and large loans advanced to them by the Government of India have never been paid." Yet we learn that the Darbar paid gold to the value of Rs. 13 56,837, on February 23, 1848, and the Resident recorded with satisfaction: "They have thus, by economy and care, been able to make good four months pay of the Irregular Cavalry, to discharge the whole of the arrears of the men who have been pensioned and disbanded, to meet their current expenses, and have still, at this moment, full eight lakh rupees in the different treasuries to meet the public exigencies."²

(5) Annual tribute paid

1. Punjab, Papers, 1849, p. 591.
2. Punjab Papers, 1849, p. 110—111.

British changes

Moreover we know that there was a lot of financial loss to the Lahore Durbar, due to some fiscal changes introduced in the Punjab, by the Resident with the consent of the Governor-General himself, which later they themselves agreed, were mis-placed so far as the Punjab was concerned. In such circumstances, if at all some loan was not paid, or its payment was delayed, it could be considered neither evasion nor violation of any clause of the treaty.

(6) Governo
r General is
confused

Confusion in the mind of the Governor-General is manifest. In the proclamation, at one place he says that "the Sikhs" have revolted, at another place, "the Sikh people," then "The Sikh nation," "The Government" and the "State of Lahore," as if all these are convertible terms. And even if the entire mass of the Sikhs revolted, the Sikhs constituted only a part of the total population of the Punjab.

(7) Instances
of France,
Nepal,

Patiala,
Nabha and
Jind

The British
determined

When Napoleon in Europe, was defeated by England and her allies, France itself was not annexed to any European country. Why did different moral principles apply to the Punjab ? In the Anglo-Nepalese Wars, Nepal was finally defeated in 1816, and a British Resident was imposed upon that country, and from that time, the system continued. Why could not the same happen in the Punjab ? In fact under reformed Government of Dalip Singh, the Punjab should have co-operated with the British as willingly as Patiala, Nabha and Jind did. If such a system could succeed in these Sikh states, why could it not succeed in the Punjab ?

In fact, as early as on October 20, 1843, Lord Ellenborough had written to Wellington: "The time can not be very distant when the Punjab will fall into our arrangement."¹ The greedy eyes of the British had been

1. Colchester, 'The Indian Administration of Lord Ellenborough, (London, 1874) pp. 339—400.

falling upon the State even during Ranjit Singh's time. But he by his diplomacy, was able to keep them at an arm's length, whereas his successors weak in talent, or unfavoured by destiny, failed to do so and succumbed to the British treacherous designs.

Commenting on Lord Dalhousie's annexation of the Punjab, thus writes Ludlow:

"Fancy, if you can, a widow lady with the police. The police knock them on the head; walk into the house, and kindly volunteer to protect the mistress against any violence on their part. A quarrel again breaks out, the truncheons are again successful, and the inspector now politely informs the lady that her house and the estate on which it stands are no longer her own, but will be retained in fee simply by the police; that on turning out she will receive an annuity equal to about one and six pence in a pound of her rental, and that she must hand over for the use of the Chief Commissioner her best diamond necklace¹."

Lady with
Police

1. 'British India', ii. p. 166.

CHAPTER XVII

Maharaja Dalip Singh

Before proceeding ahead, it would be interesting to have a short account of Maharaja Dalip Singh, and the British Dealings with him, after his kingdom was annexed to the British empire.

Born 1837

Of the seven sons of Maharaja Ranjit Singh,¹ Dalip Singh was the youngest. Born on February 5, 1837, he was only two years, four months and twenty two days old, when his father, the Lion of the Punjab died. We have studied how and in what circumstances Dalip Singh came to power in the Punjab, and how Maharani Jindan, his mother, conducted the State affairs, he being yet minor. We have also studied how the British occupied the Punjab and signed a treaty with Dalip Singh promising him and his successors a good pension.

Aged eleven

The Maharaja was in the eleventh year of his age, when he was deprived of his ancestral kingdom. Dr. Sir John Login, a man of kindly disposition and loving manners was appointed to take charge of the Maharaja. The first birthday of Dalip Singh after the annexation of his kingdom, fell on September 4, 1849, that is, he was now eleven, and entering his 12th year. Dr. Login thus wrote to his wife in the connection : "Everything was done that was in my power, to give the anniversary due honour, so that he should feel the difference in his position as little as possible, and not contrast unpleasantly with the last, when he was a reigning king. No doubt,

First
Birthday

1. They were : Kharak Singh, Sher Singh, Tara Singh, Multan Singh, Kashmira Singh, Peshora Singh and Dalip Singh.

inspite of all, he did see and feel a great differnce, poor little man ! but nevertheless he thoroughly enjoyed himself and was as delighted with the fireworks as any boy of his age could be. Luckily the evening was fine, though the deluge of rain in the morning was dreadful, and upset all my grand arrangements

"I had the great pleasure of presenting to the Maharaja, on the morning of his birthday, a lakh of rupees' worth of his own jewels from the Toshakhana which I had been empowered by Government to select and present to him.

"He appeared, therefore, dressed most splendidly; wearing, besides other jewels, the diamond aigrette and star I had selected. When I congratulated him on his appearance, he innocently remarked, that on the last birthday he had worn the Koh-i-noor on his arm !"

This was indeed a poor compensation to the Maharaja for what he had lost. If one walked through his Toshakhana, which had fallen into the British hands, that itself was a wonder. The vast quantities of gold and silver, the jewels not to be valued, so many and so rich ! The Koh-i-noor,² far beyond what one could imagine;

Innocent remark

Poor compensation

1. Dr. Login to his wife, Citadel, Sep., 5th., 1849.

2. A short account may here be given of the history of the celebrated jewel, which fell into the British hands and was passed on to the Queen of England. The origin of this peerless jewel is lost in the mists of antiquity. It had fallen into the hands of the early Turkish invaders of India, and from them it had passed to the Mughals. "My son Humayun, says Babur, "has won a jewel from the Raja, which is valued at half the daily expenses of the whole world." A century or two later the Persian conqueror, Nadir Shah, seeing its glitter in the turban of Babar's conquered descendant, exclaimed with rough and somewhat costly humour, "we will be friends, let us change turbans in pledge of friendship," and the exchange of course took

and perhaps above all the immense collection of magnificent Kushneri shawls, rooms full of them, laid out on shelves, and heaped up in bales.

After Dr. Login took his charge, the little Maharaja seems immediately to have got attached to him, looking on him as his "Ma—Bap," and not even going out to ride in the morning, or drive in the evening, unless Login would go with him.

Login,
Ma-Bap

(Foot-Note from Page 315)

place. After Nadir Shah, it passed into the hands of Ahmed Shah, then down into the possession of Shah Shuja. We have already studied, how Ranjit Singh secured the jewel from Shah Shuja. It was placed in the Maharaja's Toshakhana, but he carried it along with himself, wherever he went, under a strong guard. It was always carried in a large camel trunk, placed on the leading camel, but known only to the people of Toshakhana. The whole string of camels, which generally consisted of about one hundred, being well guarded by troops. In camp, this box was placed, between two others alike, close to the pole of the tent, Mr. Bali Ram—the incharge of Toshakhana, having his bed very close to it, and none but his relatives and confidential servants having access to it. For four years it was worn as an armlet then fitted up as a sirpesh for the turban, with a diamond drop of a tola weight attached to it. It was worn in the manner for about a year, on three or four occasions, when it was again made up as an armlet, with a diamond on each side. Shortly before the decree of annexation went forth, Lord Dalhousie had written to Henry Lawrence to make every disposition for the safe custody of the State jewels, which were about to fall into the lap of the English. Great care was therefore needed, especially as among the Punjab jewels was the matchless Koh-i-noor, the "mountain of light," which it was intended should be expressly surrendered by the young Maharaja to the English Queen. (See Lady Login, 'Sir John Login and Dalip Singh,' pp. 193-198). The jewel was brought from the old Toshakhana by Dr. Login, and placed with the other valuables in the citadel, under guard. (Ibid. p. 198) Shortly after this, Dalhousie came to Lahore and took its possession himself and later sent it to the Queen.

Shortly after this, the young Maharaja was removed from Lahore to Fattehgarh, the most elaborate precautions having been taken to prevent his abduction. Dr. Login, who was to draw a consolidated salary of 1,200 rupees a month, one-half to be paid by the British Government, and the other half to be defrayed from the annual income of the Maharaja, was issued strict instructions to guard the Maharaja against any intrigues on the part of his mother, Maharani Jindan, who was now residing under guard at Kathmandu, and who had refused to return to the British territories, but whose avowed intention was said to be to regain possession of her son.

To Fatehgarh

The precautions

At Fattehgarh, elaborate arrangements were made for the Maharaja, several bungalows and residences, belonging to various owners, each surrounded by its own compound, were purchased, and the Maharaja, Rani Duknu, the widow of Maharaja Sher Singh, who accompanied Dalip Singh thither, native gentlemen in attendance, and Dr. Login and other Europeans in attendance, all occupied separate houses, the mixture of European and Oriental arrangements at 'Fattehgarh Park' the name given to the Maharaja's small estate, looking curious.

Elaborate arrangements

Walter Guise, an Englishman, was appointed Maharaja's tutor, and every effort was made to give a good impression to the Maharaja, of Christian mode of living. As Dr. Login himself wrote in one of his letters to his wife: "I am anxious to give this young Maharaja...a favourable impression of us Christians, in our domestic state." And asking his wife to join him he added: "So you see, dearest, you have a mission to perform—to establish the character of your countrymen, and to acquire respect for them, of which they have little yet, I am afraid¹." And again he wrote: "Lord Dalhousie is afraid

Christian influence

1. Dr. Login to Lady Login, Camp, Feb. 15, 1850.

..to recommend a tutor that it might imply an interference with the boy's religious faith; I trust, however, that God helping us, we shall be enabled, as "written epistles", to manifest the spirituality and benevolence of a Christian life, if we can not otherwise preach to him. He is a strange little fellow, and shows an intelligence beyond his years. Observing that Guise, Barlow, Tommy Scott, and I have morning and evening prayers together, he asked me to order his porohut (priest) to come to him also at a fixed hour daily to read in his holy book (the Granth). This I think indicates a devotional feeling, that may hereafter be directed aright¹," And no doubt, it was not long before that the Maharaja's feelings were directed aright.

To be directed aright

Surrounded

His marriage

Sentiments towards Mother

The Maharaja was thoroughly surrounded by Christian influence and life, and played only with Christian children. No wonder, all this had its effect on his tender heart, and it was not long before he offered himself for conversion into Christianity.

Dalip Singh is himself said to have abandoned the idea of marrying the daughter of Chuttur Singh, to whom he had been betrothed. For some time two beautiful daughters of the Raja of Coorg were considered for the purpose, but later the matter was left to Dalip Singh himself to do as he would.

Regarding the Maharaja's sentiments towards his mother, thus wrote Dr. Login on April 4, 1850: "As far as I can judge, not the least desire exists on the part of the Maharajah to communicate with his mother. From all the information I could collect at Lahore from those likely to know his feelings, he appeared to dislike any reference being made to the Rani, and never mentioned her name, though he spoke readily of his uncle

1. Login to his wife, Fattegarh, May 16, 1850.

Jawahir Singh, and his affection for him; but as I was anxious to ascertain his sentiments on this point myself for my own guidance, I took a favourable opportunity to ask him regarding it. He told me he had heard nothing of her since he left Lahore, and that she had only disgraced him, "*Serif hamka budnam deah.*" and on being asked if she had not been kind to him, he said she used to strike him daily."

In November, 1850, Dr. Login being away from Fattehgarh, the Maharaja suddenly announced his intention of embracing Christianity. Although the denial of Dr. Login and his associates that nothing was done to preach Christianity upon him could not be doubted. There is no doubt that Login was anxious to effect him favourably towards Christianity through his own actions and through Christian atmosphere around the Maharaja. This ultimately had a better effect than any direct preaching could be expected to have. No haste was, however, shown in admitting the Maharaja to Christian faith after his declaration so that the people might be convinced that it was Dalip Singh's own independent decision, in which he might get yet more matured. On August 2. 1851, Dalhousie addressed the Maharaja thus: "I rejoice to learn that your Highness remains firm in your desire to be instructed in the doctrine of the Bible, and that you have resolved to embrace a faith, whose teaching, if duly practised by the help of God, will tend to increase your happiness in this life, and will secure it in another that is to come." The Maharaja was put under a probation of two years, during which he attended the church regularly. Bible was read to him and Christian influence upon him strengthened. During this period he visited Delhi, Agra, Hardwar and Mussoorie etc., wherever he went, the Christian surroundings went with him.

Announced
intention for
Christianity

Probation

Admitted by
baptism

On 8th March, 1853, the Maharaja was admitted into the Christian Church by baptism, and took the vows upon him in a most solemn and impressive manner. The ceremony took place in his private dwelling house, at Fattehgarh, in the presence of about 25 of the European residents of the station, and nearly an equal number of the Maharaja's principal Indian servants. Dalhousie addressing Dr. Login on March 13, 1853, remarked, "I regard it as a very remarkable event in history, and in every way gratifying."

To England

After some hesitations, permission was granted to Dalip Singh to visit England. And on the 19th April, 1854, before Dalip Singh and his party sailed for England the Maharaja received from Dalhousie a copy of Bible and a note which read :—

"My Dear Maharaja,

Farewell
message

Before you quit India, I have been desirous of offering you a parting gift, which in future years might sometimes remind you of me.

Since that day, when the course of public events placed you a little boy in my hands, I have regarded you in some sort as my son. I therefore ask you, before we part, to accept from me the volume which I should offer to my own child, as the best of all gifts, since in it alone is to be found the secret of real happiness either in this world or in that which is to come.

"I bid you farewell, my dear Maharaja, and beg you to believe me always.

With sincere regard,
Your Highness's faithful friend"

In England

Visiting Egyption Pyramids, Cairo, the Amercian Mission Schools in the city and Alexandria etc.. the

Maharaja sailed ahead. While still in Indian waters, at Aden and elsewhere, regular salute ordered by the Governor-General was given the Maharaja, on the vessel which conveyed him dropping anchor; but there was some uncertainty in Dalip Singh's mind as to the exact amount of recognition to be awarded him by the Home Government. When at Malta, therefore, the guns were fired, he quietly seemed to be counting the number, "and when the total reached twenty, and there could be no doubt that a full "royal salute" of twenty-one guns was intended, he could no longer repress the look of satisfaction which appeared on his countenance.¹"

When Dalip Singh reached England, the Court of Directors, as a mark of respect, provided him with a residence at their own expense, and regarding this thus did Dalhousie address Dr Login: "you have a tidy little bit of business in getting a house out of the Court, and I advise you to rest content with that, and not seek for more "marks of consideration, or they may be anxious for his return to Fattehghur!²"

While in India, Dalip Singh had adopted a semi-European style of dress, which consisted of the Sikh, embroidered *Kurta*, or Kashmeri tunic, and over that a single-breast velvet coat, richly embroidered in gold; English trousers, with a stripe of gold embroidery down the seams. In his Sikh turban was a jewelled aigrette, and three rows of large pearls were a round his neck; frequently he had on other jewels besides these, but he was never without the pearl necklace, and a pair of large emerald-and-pearl rings. In England he wore a completely national costume, but after some time, fully adopted English dress for all occasions.³

1. Lady Login, p. 333.

2. D. to L., Sept., 1854.

3. Lady Login, pp. 335—336

The salutes
Court grants
a house

His dress

Queen's audience

Koh-i-noor presented.

Soon after the Maharaja's arrival in England, the Queen and the Prince consort gave him a special audience. The Queen being charmed with his manners and appearance, gave orders for a full-length portrait of the Maharaja to be painted by Winchester, for which he gave sittings at Buckingham Palace, twice a week, in which the Queen and Prince Albert were always present. In one of the sittings, unknown to Dalip Singh, the Queen brought in Koh-i-noor, and before the astonishing Maharaja realized what was passing, the celebrated jewel was in his hand, and the Queen enquired if he could recognize it and whether he thought it improved. It was a nervous quarter of an hour for Lady Login who was present there. The purpose had been that the Queen wanted the jewel to be handed over to her by the Maharaja by his own hands so that she could bring peace to her conscience within. With an emotion and eagerness the Maharaj moved to the window, and after examining it minutely and making remarks, on its greater brilliancy and diminished size, with a low obeisance, presented the jewel to Her expressing gracefully, a few words of pleasure which it afforded him to have the opportunity of himself presenting it to Her.

His Rank

The Princesses

The Maharaja accompanied the Queen once to see the Prorogation of Parliament. His rank was determined to be the same as that of an European prince, and was authorised to take precedence next after the Royal family. The Queen was also pleased to confer the honour of Knighthood on Login. During his visit to Osborne, the Maharaja was treated again with kindness by the Queen and the Prince, the Princesses treating him as one of themselves. Here the Maharaja took several photographs with the help of Prince consort in one of which he is seen with the young Princesses dressed in Maharaj's Indian costumes. This also established a correspondence between him and the princesses. Later, the Queen also

ordered a bust of the Maharaja to be executed by Baron Marochetti.

The Maharaja in the mean while, continued his education. He developed an admiration for Shakespeare, besides his knowledge of English, he learnt German, but Italian was his favourite European language. He also visited Italy. In Rome, the Maharaja was given due honour by Pope. As a special compliment to him, the Pope ordered the sculpture galleries of the Vatican to be lighted up with *flambeaux* for his inspection.

As the time passed, the Maharaja now got anxions to know what arrangement was contemplated for his future. He had a legal claim upon the accumulations as may have taken place during his minority, by lapses of pensions from the allowance of "not less than four lakhs, and not more than five lakhs, per annum," to which he and his family and servants were entitled by the treaty. Soon, however, he was given to understand that such lapses could not be claimed by him. Dalip Singh, however, had an undue faith in the British sense of justice. On December 9, 1856, he wrote to the court of Directors, in which, without making a reference to the treaty he requested 'that such provision be assigned to me as may appear liberal.'

In reply, the Court expressed satisfaction for the excellent disposition manifested by him during his stay in England, and promised to refer the question to Government of India and make provision according to the treaty, in connection to which, he would be addressed again. This reply was received by the Maharaja in February 1857, but he having received no further intimation even by May, was going to address the Court again, when the Mutiny broke out in India. He therefore, decided to wait until the intelligence was received of the recapture of Delhi. The Maharaja does not seem to have developed any sympathy for the mutineers in India, nor any ambition

His
education

Financial
arrangement

Court
satisfied,

But no
money

The Mutiny

for the re-capture of his position, during this time. His residence at Fattehgarh, rather, had been sacked and burnt by the mutineers, and his faithful servants murdered.

Legal
majority

Having come of age, the Maharaja applied for emancipation from guardianship, but not till December 29, 1857 when he had exceeded by three years, the age at which Hindu princes attained their legal majority, did the court permit him to assume management of his own affairs. The change having taken place in India, Dalhousie being replaced by Lord Canning, the Maharaja lost the benefit of sympathies of a man, who after depriving him of his kingdom, was considerate in making provision for his future.

To meet
mother

In the meanwhile, the Maharaja grew anxious to meet his mother. He therefore sailed to India authorising Dr. Login to carry on efforts to settle his affairs with the Government. In India, as he wrote in February, 1861, he was given a "salute of twenty-one guns...an escort of two *sowars*! and a guard of one *paharah* of four Sepoys, and a Naick.¹"

Besieged
and back

About the time of the Maharaja's visit to India, several Sikh regiments arrived from China. Hearing of their former ruler's arrival, they besieged his hotel, and were very demonstrative to welcome him. This made Lord Canning anxious who urged the Maharaja to leave for England, immediately along with his mother. Reaching England, the Maharaja's mother was determined not to reside separately from her son any longer but seeing that under his mother's influence, he may not lapse into the old habits of his faith, his Christian friends prevailed ultimately upon him to get her separate residence, till she died in August 1863. Two months after this event he had to mourn the loss of ,one whom he had given the

Friends died

1. Dalip S. to L., Spence's Hotel, Feb., 1861.

respect of his father. Dr. Login died on October 18, 1863. In the meanwhile, the Maharaja lost yet another friend,—Prince Consort, with whose efforts Dalip Singh appeared in the very first list of the recipients, as Knight Grand Cross of the Order, after the new Order of the Star of India had been founded.

Soon the Maharaja had to embark to convey his mother's remains to India. Before leaving England, he told Lady Login that he dreaded marriage with a worldly woman, and had therefore decided to visit the Missionary School at Cairo on his way out, and to ask the missionaries if they could help him. Maharani Jindan's remains were landed at Bombay, where arrangements were made for her funeral rites, and the ashes were scattered on the sacred waters of the Narbda.¹

Again to
India

While at Bombay, the Maharaja announced his engagement, and soon after a note appeared in *Times of India* regarding a marriage in Egypt, which said: "The marriage of the Maharaja Dalip Singh took place at the British consulate, Alexandria, on the 7th June, in the presence of a very few witnesses. The young lady who has now become the Maharani is the daughter of un European merchant here. Her mother is an Abyssinian. She is between fifteen and sixteen years of age, of a slight but graceful figure, interesting rather than handsome, not tall, and in complexion lighter than her husband. She is a Chirstian, and was educated in the American Presbyterian Mission School at Cairo; and it was during a chance visit there, while on his way out to India, that the Prince saw his future bride, who was engaged as instructress in the School." Name of the bride was Bamba Muller. Soon after, the couple reached England and retired for a time, into peaceful married life.

His
Marriage

1. Lady Login, pp. 487—88.

Funda-
mental
Differences

In the meanwhile, the efforts to reach a financial settlement with the British Government continued; But by this time there had developed fundamental differences on the interpretation that was to be given to the treaty the British had signed at the time of the annexation of the Punjab. A few extracts from the Maharaja's book, which he published with the help of his solicitor in June, 1884, in this connection, will explain the case.

Fourth
Article

The 4th Article of the Treaty reads : "His Highness Dalip Singh shall receive from the Honourable East India Company, for the support of himself, his relatives and the servants of the State, a pension not less than four, and not exceeding five lakhs of Company's rupees per annum." The 5th Article says : "..... he shall continue to receive, during his life, such portion of the above-named pension as may be allowed to himself personally, provided he shall remain obedient to the British Government.... ."

Fifth Article

"The personal claim of the Maharaja," says the Minute of the Council,¹ "is here limited to the receipt, for his life, of his personal stipend; and the amount to be allotted to him was left entirely to the Government of India."

Allotment
to Maharaja

"During the first years of the Maharaja's minority the annual sum allotted for his personal allowance was 120,000 rupees per annum which was increased to 150,000 per annum at his attaining the age of eighteen. The Indian Government recommended that at the age of 21, he should be allotted 25,000 ($2\frac{1}{2}$ lakh rupees), which together with the sum allotted to other recipients under 4th Article, would exceed the amount four lakhs."

The Papses

The Maharaja's claim that the other recipients of the allowance should be paid through him and that in case of the decease of any one of them or some other lapses,

1. By Sir Charles Wood, K. C. B., March 21, 1860.

the benefit of the allowances, as under the 4th Article, should fall to him as head of the family, was not accepted. Such lapses, according to British interpretation, were to fall to them.

Secondly, the difference between the sums actually allotted to the Maharaja and his relatives etc. and the sum promised in the 4th Article, had now reached the figure between £ 150,000 and £ 200,000. The Maharaja claimed this as payable to him. But according to the British Government, under 5th Article, it was not so, and the Government could allow him an allotment as they themselves felt due.

Paid and Promised

Several other claims were forwarded by the Maharaja such as the one upon his private ancestral property which Ranjit Singh possessed in 1800, before he attained sovereignty of the Puajab, the annual value of which was Rs. 20,499, and which had not in any way been touched upon by the treaty. Dalip Singh valued his property pillaged at Fattehgarh at Rs. 198,182, while the Government offered him for this a compensation only of £3,000, which he considered as insulting¹.

Ancestral Property

The Maharaja offered to abide by the arbitration of any three English statesmen to be named by the Queen if they were unconnected with the India Office. But nothing came out of it. Ultimately when the climax was reached, and it was no longer possible for him to support his rank in England, with the means at his disposal, he found himself "done with England and her hypocrisies." and embarked with his whole family for India. Before leaving England, he addressed the following letter to his countrymen :

Fattehgarh Property

No arbitrati-
on

To India

1. See also his letter to Times, Appendix I.

My dear Countrymen !

I never had an intention to come and reside in India, but due to Gods' will, despite my desire otherwise, I am comming to my country.

Dear Brothers ! I honestly beg your forgiveness for having left the Sikh religion and adopted the Christianity because when I adopted Christianity, I was very young, and had no understanding whatsoever. It is my heart-felt desire that I should come to Punjab, but restrictions are placed against my coming to Punjab. Therefore I am writing this letter to my countrymen.

London

I am

March 25, 1886.

Your own blood and flesh,

Dalip Singh

Arrested

After this he left for India, but the moment he entered the Indian waters, he was arrested at Aden, by orders of Lord Dufferin. The Maharani returned at once with the family to England, while the Maharaja, furious at this insult, refused to accept for himself a pension from the British Government any longer, and withdrew to the continent of Europe.

Maharani's
death and
children

The Maharani died in the following year, leaving three sons and three daughters, to be provided for by the British Government. The four younger children were placed under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Oliphant, at Brighton, while the eldest son, Prince Victor, godson of the Queen, entered Her Majesty's service, holding a commission in the Royal Dragoons, and being allowed £ 2,000 a year by the India Office. Prince Frederick, godson of the Emperor of Germany, who graduated at Cambridge, was also provided for.

The Maharaja reached France,¹ where with the help of the French Government, he tried to reach Pondichary, the French colony in India, but failed. From here he moved to Germany and then to Russia from where he addressed a letter to Indian newspapers, which was published in October 1887, appealing to the Indians to contribute one pice per person a month, and to the Punjabi's to contribute one anna to help him, and that he would come to India with the help of the Russian forces. But neither in India nor in Russia could he get what he desired. He returned to France, where he married a French lady, and died on October 23, 1893, poor and destitute, the Maharaja of the Punjab. All his children died issueless, and thus was the symbol of the Sikh royalty destroyed, which the Lion of the Punjab had nurtured and fostered with so much labour and toil.

France

Russia

Died 1893

1. When he lost hope of coming to Punjab, it is said he received baptism and returned to the Sikh faith at Aden itself.

Mahomme-
dan pro-
vince

CHAPTER XIX

New Settlement in the Punjab.

The British Administration—Till 1857.

The First Sikh War had added a little over 15,000 square miles to the British territory, while the Second one added a kingdom five times as large as that. Judged from population, the Punjab thus occupied, was a Mahomedan province, with half of its population consisting of this community. The Sikhs constituted only one-third of it.

A—The Arrangement Made.

"To ensure substantial justice, the protection of the law was extended to the people without its tedious formalities and intricate niceties, and if the system inaugurated was lax, compared with the strict procedure of the regulation province, it was thoroughly adapted to the condition of the people inured to war, recently deprived of power and accustomed to be ruled by a despotic, unconstitutional government¹."

Protection
of law
extended

Non-Regu-
lation,
system

The Punjab was to be administered under 'Non-Regulation system, which according to Aitchison means, 'that the administration should be conducted according to the principles and spirit of the Regulation, but not fettered by the letter, and that justice, equity, and conscience should speak when the law is silent².' The constitutional result of the system being a Government independent of Legislature, or in other words a clear despotism. As again in the words of Aitchison, three principles characterised the system: "First, the country

1. Latif, p. 574.

2. 'Lord Lawrence', p. 59.

was mapped out into Districts, so small in respect of area, population, and revenue, that it was possible for the civil officer to gain a complete knowledge of them and to become personally acquainted with all the men of mark and influence. Secondly, every civil functionary from the highest to the lowest, in due order of subordination, was vested with judicial, fiscal and magisterial powers, so as to secure concentration of authority and undivided responsibility. Thirdly, the law and procedure introduced were of the simplest kind, and were based as far as might be on Native Customs and *Institutions*¹."

A Board of Administration was set up in the country which was to consist of three persons Sir Henry Lawrence was appointed in-charge of Military and Political affairs. His brother John Lawrence was to be the Head of Revenue and Financial matters. And Charles Mansel was appointed chief of the Judicial Department. Sir Henry Lawrence, being the most experienced man of the three, was to work as President of the Board. Although in their respective departments, all the three possessed final authority and could do what they liked, they worked jointly when a question of more than ordinary importance was involved. Ultimately, therefore, it was an arrangement which devolved on the members of the government a common responsibility, together with divided duties—which rendered each answerable for the acts of the other two^a.

A word may be forwarded regarding the constitution of the Board. Of the two brothers, John had a leaning towards Dalhousie, the Governor-General, while Sir Henry had already once clashed with him, and had been against the very policy of annexation of the Punjab, followed by the Governor-General. "The brothers were

Three principles involved

Board of Administration

Common responsibility

Constitution of the Board

Lawrence brothers

1. Ibid, pp. 60–61.

(a) Edwards and Merivale, p. 444.

Mansel

therefore," thus writes Gough, "certain to pull different ways; and while, as the event proved, such an antagonism could not but have results personally painful in the highest degree. The event also proved that in policy each counteracted the extreme views of the other. The effect was a very excellent government, though partisans of either brother, would maintain that one or the other, left free, would have produced results still more admirable." And Mansel, of the three "having abstract method of regarding all questions as rather subjects of philosophic disputation, than as demanding immediate practical solution¹," would rarely side with one or the other, and he therefore always helped in keeping the balance.

Qualities of Henry,

and of John

And again to quote Gough, Henry Lawrence having already acted as Resident in the Punjab, "There was no other man who had already so effectively and so widely won the personal admiration and confidence of the natives..... Next to him stood his brother John; harder of head, less tender of heart; his theories perhaps more convincing to the Western minds but less appreciated by the Oriental².

"Boards indeed rarely have any talent," thus remarked Sir Charles Napier, "and that of the Punjab offers no exception to the rule." But these remarks seem to be too sweeping. The Board, although it had no alternative but ultimately to be broken and replaced by one man's rule, can not be said to have produced the results in any way less wholesome.

Men of sub-ordinate position

The men selected for subordinate positions were among the best officers that the Government could produce whole over India. The names of the some may here be mentioned. They were : Herbert Edwards, John Abbott, John Nicholson, Robert Montgomery, Robert

1. Sikhs and Sikh Wars, p. 267.

Napier, Hodson, Alexander Taylor and Neville Chamberlain.

B—Work of the Board.

While entrusting to the Board, the Administration of the Punjab, Dalhousie had remarked, "by prosecuting these projects of employment and directing the energies of the people to new sources of interest and excitement we may gradually wean them from those schemes of agitation and violence... ...and it may be our happiness before long to see our efforts crowned by the conversion of a martial and hostile population into industrious subjects cultivating the arts of peace and cultivation." The work of the Board, was therefore, to revive peace and give prosperity to the country. As Sir Henry Lawrence wrote to one of his subordinates : "In a new country,... promptness, accessibility, brevity, and kindness are the best engines of Government. Have as few forms as possible, and as are consistent with a brief record of proceedings. Be considerate, and kind..."¹

Dalhousie's
instructions

Sir Henry's
instructions

The first step that the Board took after assuming the charge of Government, was to divide the country into 7 districts, each with a commissioner and subordinate officers. Lahore was entrusted to the special charge of Montgomery, who was subsequently replaced by Mansel. Sir Henry Lawrence himself, undertook a series of peregrinations of the entire province, which although transferring much of his burden to the other two offended Dalhousie, did an immense good to the country. He studied the people, their prejudices and character personally, and mixing the knowledge thus collected with the kindness of his habit, he conducted the policy of his Government.

Country
divided

Tours of
Henry,

their results

1. See Gough, p. 271.

Military Measures—(i)

The Khalsa army

Although Ranjit Singh had done his best to tame the free-booters of the Sikh community into a well disciplined military machine, it required at least ten years more of his life to teach these brave soldiers an art of obedience to the civil authorities. The soldiers of the Khalsa army had caused anarchy in the country, and this element had to be got rid of, if the Board wanted to establish peace in the country. Consequently, the British Government took some measures. Most of the Sikh soldiers were paid off and retired to their homes to take up their long forgotten profession of agriculture. Only able bodied were retained in the service, while old and weak among them were granted lavish pensions.

Secondly, all the forts except those required for Military purposes, and which thus were repaired and put under better and more efficient control; were dismantled. Thirdly, to check uprisings in the north-west frontiers of the Punjab, and to keep the frontier tribes in control, a new force, known as the Punjab Frontier Force was created. This included renowned corps of Guides and a proportion of the more turbulent spirits, who might otherwise have proved harmful. Fourthly, to maintain law and order in the country a strong police force of 8100 men was created. And fifthly, with the exception of some hill tribes, subject to free-booters and brigands, in those districts where the people themselves had to work as their police, all the rest of the population of the Punjab was disarmed. Such measures, therefore, not only deprived the Punjab of those elements which could be a danger to her peace, but by active measures to employ the discharged military soldiers on the land to channelise their energy into productive pursuits, the land had four-fold tilling strength added to it, which converted the Punjab into a real granary of wheat.

Soldiers retired

Foots repaired.

Punjab Frontier Force

Police force

People disarmed

Discharged soldiers

Thr Civil Works—(ii)

During the after-years of Ranjit Singh, every administrator being busy in the contest for power and more power, the Punjab had lost almost every kind of civil security. No regular assessments and collections of land revenue had been made during these years. No attention given to public health. Irregular weights and measures and irregular customs and tolls *marred* the face of the administration.

Position
before
annexation

After the military measures had been taken, the country was mapped out into districts, and a system of regular revenue settlement with the cultivators was introduced. A reduction was made in the rate of assessment. While land revenue continued to be based on the value of the produce as before, only $1/4$ or even $1/8$ at certain places, of the total produce was claimed. The payment was to be in cash. Despite a *reduction* in the rate of assessment, however, an effort being made to abolish the middleman, there was no diminution in the revenue.

Mapped out

Settlement

Cash pay-
ment

No dimi-
nution

In other taxes again the policy followed was that light "taxation means lower prices, followed by increased demand and increased supply; while high taxation is also a direct inducement to smuggling, and to the bribing of officials." "The number of taxable articles was promptly cut down, and the taxes on the remainder greatly reduced, consequently the contribution to the treasury was very materially increased, while the consumers had all the benefit of increased production and lower prices."¹ The resources of the country were developed: while taxes weighing on trade were removed, House tax was abolished, it being substituted by octroi duties in towns and large villages. Tea cultivation was introduced in Kangra hills.

Other taxes

A reduction

House tax
abolished

1. Gough, p. 275.

Punjab paid its way.

a surplus

Views differed

Henry wanted to retain

John's views prevailed

Jagirdars exterminated

From the very beginning the Punjab paid its way. The critics of the Board of Administration denied it, but they included in its expenditure the frontier defence, which infact was a province of the Central Government. Because if it was the duty of the centre to bear the expenses on the Sutlej border, the extension of the boundary line upto Afghanistan, in no way transferred the burden to a province. So taking this fact into consideration, there was a surplus of 52, 64 and 70 lakhs of rupees in each of the first three years respectively. The total revenue, which was Rs. 134 lakhs in 1849, rose to Rs. 205 lakhs in 1957.

The Jagirs.

While there was no material difference in the policy towards land assessment and general taxation, there was much discussion on the policy to be followed towards jagirdars. Jagirs had been the grants of land made under Ranjit Singh, free from any charge except military service, and they were a source from which wealth and power of Sikh leaders were drawn. The problem of dealing with the holders of these grants, the jagirdars, was difficult, as each case required individual legal treatment, and it was therefore an endless source of disputes.

The view held by Sir Henry Lawrence was that justice demanded a liberal view of this class, so that the jagirdars were converted into friends with maximum of prestige and influence. John Lawrence and Dalhousie, on the other hand held that justice entitled them to nothing more than a mere subsistence and the less the power they were left with, the better. John's views ultimately prevailed, and Montgomery who succeeded Mansel in 1850, was also inclined to the same side.

Thus, although after Henry had left the Province, John relaxed the severity of the policy considerably, the result of his policy of extermination, in practice, was that

by 1857, except perhaps Tej Singh, none was left with the means to raise a large body of troops to support or to oppose the British. Whether this policy paid the British or not, it is difficult to judge. "If the Sirdars were inherently disloyal, conciliation would have been wasted; if they were prepared to be loyal, an opportunity for acquiring powerful support was thrown away..... But it was an article of faith with those who knew him (Henry) best; that if he had been allowed to carry it out himself in his own way he would have succeeded; and the Sikhs in 1857 would have poured down to our assistance at Delhi when Lawrence raised his hand, in force so much greater as to have crushed the rebellion at the outset."¹

Merit of
policy

The Public Utility works.

Some public utility works were also undertaken. The repair of the Grand Trunk Road from Lahore to Peshawer was undertaken; Cross roads throughout the territory wherever they existed, were also brought under repair. The construction of new roads was also undertaken, and the development of the means of communication thus rendered it easy to put an end to "thuggee." Besides, public buildings were constructed and new gardens were laid out. The digging of the Bari Doab Canal was also taken in hand. Dispensaries were set up to look after the public health. And new and better types of coins were introduced.

Roads,

'Thugee',
public
buildings,

gardens,

Bari Doab
Canal,

dispensaries,
and better
coins.

The Codification of Laws.

One of the most important works undertaken, was the codification of Laws. The Punjab, even in the time of Ranjit Singh, had no specific code of Laws. The judges based their justice on tradition, their whim being the final legal authority.

Under Sikhs

After
annexation

"After annexation the administration was guided in civil matters by the simple Rules which had been adopted in the Sutlej territories, and in criminal matters by the principles of the Regulation, as stated in the ordinary text-books, a large discretion being left to Magistrates to frame their proceedings, so as to suit the circumstances of the country." With the diversity of tribes and races in the Punjab, however, a corresponding diversity of customs existed, all of which were not covered by the Laws of the text-books of Hindus and Mahomedans. It was essential, therefore, that a compendious abstract of legal principles, with special reference to the known peculiarities of the country and the people be prepared. Sir Robert Montgomery and Sir Richard Temple were appointed to do the job. A remarkable work was thus prepared, which, while recognising the local and tribal usages, had its general principles "drawn from the Regulations, the Hindu and Mahomedan law, English law, and various other sources." Even the code Napoleon was made to do service.

Law codified

Provisions
of code,

and its
anticipa-
tions

Its benefits

The code "provided that custom is to prevail over the ordinary Hindu and Mahomedan law in the decision of such matters as inheritance, property of women, marriage, divorce, adoption, and the like, which intimately affect the dearest interests of the people. At the same time it introduced some enlightened provisions, which anticipated by years the course of general legislation. Among these may be mentioned the recognition of the re-marriage of Hindu widows, limited liability in partnership, and the abolition of usury laws."

Benefits of the code can not be over-estimated. "This simple code has long been superceded by the progress of the country, thus wrote Aitchison. "But it was admirably suited to the time when it was framed." It not only saved the province from fetters of the intricate Hindu and Mahomedan law, it also proved to be

bulwark against flood of English law. It saved social and tribal customs, and at the same time admitted of their growth and improvement. And it "compelled the legislature to provide in its future laws for local and provincial usages."¹

Female Infanticide.

Female infanticide was also brought within the pale of law. The expenses involved in the marriage of a girl, was one of the causes of female infanticide. A great inducement to it, therefore, was removed by the suppression of hosts of beggars who attended every marriage. In the suppression of this crime, which had attached to itself a sort of religious sanction, an active cultivation of less barbarous public opinion than a resort to the terror of an alien rule was sought. And this, though slowly, yet surely, had the ultimate effect of removing this crime which disgraced the face of the country.

Brought under law

No terror

The Development of Education

1849–1857.

Before the Punjab was annexed, and more particularly in the time of Ranjit Singh, not less attention had been paid towards the development of education. "Torn by invasion and civil war," thus writes Leitner, the Punjab "ever preserved and added to educational endowments. The most unscrupulous chief, the avaricious money lender and even the free booter, vied with the small land owner in making peace with his conscience by founding schools and rewarding the learned."²

Before Annexation

All interested

There existed three types of schools in the Punjab; those run by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs respectively. In Hindu schools, rudiments of arithmetic was generally taught in Hindi characters; in Muslim schools Quran was read in Arabic and didactic poetical works of Sadee in

Three types

1. Aitchison, pp. 64–67.

2. The Indigenous Education in Punjab, p. i.

Persian, while in the Sikh Schools, The Adi Granth was taught in Gurmukhi. In Persian schools, Hindu students were found in large numbers, while in Hindi schools, often a Muslim whose ancestors might have been Hindus, was found. Besides, there existed some schools run by the Hindus, in which, works in Sanskrit were read and taught. These schools resembled Arabic Schools in their method of teaching Quran. Most of the scholars who studied Sanskrit, did so for priestly offices, and several of them begged about their living.

The Sans-krit schools

School houses

The school houses before the annexation, were primitive, the teacher and the taught generally meeting in a private dwelling, or a village town; under the shade of a tree or a temporary shed; in a mosque or a temple where they were attached with the respective religious institution, both being supported by endowments. The remuneration of the teacher consisted generally of presents made by the parents of the pupils, while sometimes cash payments were also made.

**Proof of,
Punjabi's
interest**

That the Punjabis evinced a very keen interest in education, is proved from the fact that "seeing that the Government interested itself in the subject; numerous petitions were presented to the local authorities praying for the establishment of schools, immediately after the annexation¹."

After the Annexation.

**Collection of
figures**

In one of the earliest proclamations, it was declared by the British Government, that they were very keenly interested in developing education in the country. The first step towards this end was to know what the people themselves had been doing in the field. Investigations were made. Although no reliable figures could be collected, yet it would be interesting to know what they

1. Punjab Administration Report, 1849—51.

discovered. The figures regarding three divisions, as reported in the first Administration Report of the Punjab, may be given.

Division	One School to every inhabitant.	One Scholar to every inhabitant
Lahore	1,78,398	214.85
Jhelum	1,44,190	193.10
Multan	1,66,666	210.88

The best scheme should have been to improve the indigenous schools bringing them to the required standard, and then to add to their number by constructing the new ones. The Education Despatch of 1854 also recommended the indigenous schools to be improved by grants-in-aid. Such a use of the indigenous schools had not been made in the North-West Provinces (U. P.), where instead of spending small amounts of money to bring the existing schools to the required standard, huge amounts of money were spent to set up new schools, which developed at the cost of indigenous schools, thus resulting not in as fast development of education as otherwise could have been possible. In the Punjab, in the early years of its annexation, the authorities seemed to be determined not to repeat the same mistake. But it is not known what happened later, which resulted in unfortunate change of the policy, the Court of Directors themselves authorising the Punjab Government, in their letter No. 23, dated May 27, 1856, the abandonment of the efforts to improve the indigenous schools.

Thus the indigenous schools declined as the new, English schools were set up. The Education Department in the Punjab, was organised in 1854, which was administered at first by a Director, 2 Inspectors of schools, 10 Deputy Inspectors, and 60 sub-Deputy Inspectors.

Collections
of figures.

Practice
followed in
N.W.P.

Indigenous
schools

Education
Department

The schools directly supported by the Government, consisted in 1854 of 24 Zilah schools, 100 Tehsil schools, and 4 Normal schools. A cess of one percent on land revenue, which according to Dr. Leitner, was originally meant only to be devoted to the indigenous schools, was spent in maintaining schools entirely under the control of the Department, each of which might serve a cluster of villages.

Position in
1854

The Persian script, already in use throughout the Western Punjab, and in two thirds of the indigenous schools of the Eastern districts, was unhesitatingly adopted as the standard, but the choice of language offered greater difficulties. Punjabi, as the Punjab Administration Report of 1851-52 reported "is now rapidly falling into disuetude." The Punjabi as a spoken language, was also said to have been loosing its currency and degenerating into a provincial dialect, whereas Urdu was becoming familiar to the upper and middle classes. It was, therefore, decided that Persian Urdu with the Persian script was to be taught in schools under the Government patronage, as Urdu was "becoming more than a lingua franca,"¹ Gurmukhi and Hindi schools were, however, to be encouraged wherever the people desired them.²

Thus within a short period of four years of its life, that is from 1849 to 1853, the Board established a "system of administration complete in all branches—military, civil and financial, in addition to which it provided roads, canals and jails, put an end to 'thuggee' and dacoity, codified the laws, refined the coinage and promoted agriculture." Education was also developed, though the indigenous schools declined.

Persian
script
adopted

Persian
Urdu selec-
ted

An Estimate

1. Pb. Admn. Report, 1854-55 & 1855-56,

2. Home, Secret, News Paper Reports, Pb., 1890, p. 99.

C—Dissolution of the Board.

The Board was not destined to continue its existence for a long time, and there were several causes for it. The demand made on both the Lawrence brothers, and especially on Sir Henry Lawrence, was cruel. Henry was compelled to subordinate his own views, to those of less experienced persons. Moreover, the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, showed more confidence in John than in Henry, and this was perhaps inevitable. Firstly because John supported the views and policy of the Governor-General, more than Henry did. And the Governor-General, who was himself a man of autocratic dispositions and who would brook no opposition, was destined to turn against Henry. And secondly, if it was a natural result of Henry's peregrinations, his contacts with the Governor-General were less, while the correspondence between Dalhousie and the stationary members increased. Montgomery, who had replaced Mansel as member of the Board, though intimate friend of the both, could bring about no improvement in the relation between the two brothers.

At last, therefore, when in 1852, the Residency of Hyderabad, fell vacant, both the brothers applied for it. Henry was removed from the Punjab by the Governor-General, but to make his blow bitter, he was told that the post of Residency at Hyderabad, required trained civilians and he, therefore, was given the Residency of Rajputana instead. The Board was dissolved in February, 1853, and in its place, all the authority of the Punjab Government was entrusted to Sir John Lawrence, the first Chief commissioner of the Punjab.

D—The Punjab under John Lawrence.

John Lawrence had acquired considerable experience and knowledge regarding the Punjab problems, during

Causes of dissolution

Henry to
Rajputana

Punjab to
John

John's ex-
perience

his chief commissionership of the jullunder Doab, when that territory was occupied by the British after the First Anglo-Sikh war, and as Head of the revenue and financial departments in the Board. When a complete control of the Punjab Government was therefore given to him, he acquitted himself quite creditably, the proof of which lies in the fact that the Punjab remained loyal during the Mutiny.

During the short span of its life, the Board of Administration had originated many reform measures in the Punjab, all of which could not be worked out by it. It lay, therefore, with John Lawrence, to bring the measures to their fruition, when he assumed the charge of the Government, in his own responsibility. John Lawrence appointed a Judicial Commissioner and a Financial Commissioner to work under him as his subordinates and with their help he proceeded to enforce his measures.

John and the Sikh Aristocracy.

Henry Lawrence, as discussed above, had opposed the extinction of the jagirdars, while John and Dalhousie saw no use in their continuation. Left to do as he desired, John proceeded to effect the plans as he desired, but he also had changed his mind by this time, and his plans were, therefore, tempered with moderation. Not only the troops supplied by the jagirdars had proved less useful in war, these jagirs had led to the resentment of big number of those from whom these lands had been taken away. John Lawrence, therefore, preferred money payments to the nobles and direct recruitment of troops. The nobles therefore were granted lavish pensions; their lands were confiscated and they were expected to keep no troops except some retainers. To keep them silent and loyal to the Government, their hereditary claims were recognised and the Government officers were ordered to treat them

The Fruition

A moderate policy

August in favour

Renued every year

with regard. Since their pensions were to be renewed every year, they were bound to remain loyal to the Government. These pensions were also extended to the royal widows, their retainers, musicians, physicians, servants and men-in-waiting.

John and the Priestly Classes.

The treatment meted out to the priestly classes was statesman like. The Sikh and the Mohammedan priestly classes were given due respect. The prominent holy places, such as Dera Baba Nanak, Taran Taran, Amritsar and Anandpur, were permitted to retain their endowments. The village-gurdwaras and other religious places were also permitted to retain their grants of land.

Religious institutions

John and the Agricultural Classes.

John had held that a contented and prosperous peasantry was a bulwark of the empire. A light assessment of land revenue was therefore the best passport towards winning their favour. The revenue demand was, therefore, cut down and the cultivators were encouraged to bring more and more of waste lands under plough. Demand in revenue was reduced on the express condition that the money thus saved would be spent by the agriculturists in digging wells or in bringing waste lands under the plough. The revenue was to be paid in cash, thus ending the possibilities of corruption in the payment in kind. The Chaudharis and other revenue collectors were replaced by efficient and honest officials. Measurements of lands were enforced, training of village accountants was undertaken and rights on land were registered.

Demand

Honest officials

Besides, to encourage improvement, free takavi advances were made, which amounted in 1858-59, to Rs. 57,670. Within 1856-58, the Punjabis being employed in the army in large numbers, a severe drain of money from the Punjab as a result of the Hindostani soldiers being

Takavi loans

Soldiers' money

bumper crops

Canals, roads etc.

Education

'Thuggi'

Prison labour

Census

Caravan-sarais

Breed of cattle,

trees planted

posted in the Punjab, was stopped. Thousands of Punjabis working in the army, within and outside the Punjab, remitted part of their salaries to their families in the villages, and bumper crops successively in three years before the Mutiny added to it, brought prosperity to the Punjab peasants unknown to them for years. No wonder, therefore, that the Punjabis did not participate in the Mutiny.

Public Works.

For centuries together, before and during the time of Ranjit Singh, the Punjab had been a battlefield. Peace being established, the Public works were now seriously undertaken. The external face of the country was changed by the public works which indicated the very safety, security and prosperity of the country. Canals, roads, public schools, dispensaries, gardens and public buildings were included in the subject. Facts have already been given regarding the development of education in the Punjab, upto the year 1857.

Other State Measures

"Other important State measures adopted were the crusade against dacoity, the suppression of thuggi, the movement against infanticide, the tracking of criminals, the economic and hygienic reformation of the jails, the utilisation of prison labour.....the census of the population, the preparation of statistics, the arrangements for the great highways, the erection of caravan-sarais and supply-depots, the improvement of the breed of cattle, the planting of trees, the pursuit of agricultural science, geological researches, and lastly, the supervision of finance."¹

1. Latif, pp. 576-577.

"Thus, the face of the Punjab blushed to tell its own tale. Both the Lawrence brothers had done their best to take confusion, uneasiness and anarchy out of the people's mind, and they were really successful in their mission. As Lord Dalhousie had said, people were rightly provided with those schemes and projects by which their attention was diverted from warlike schemes to their lands, where they were provided with every sort of peace and easiness." And the people repayed the Government by remaining loyal to it in 1851.

"From the days of Nanak the Saint and Govind the lion, to those of Hardinge and Gough, of Edwardes and Nicholson, of the Lawrence brothers and Dalhousie, all honour to the heroes of the Pnnjab¹."

An estimate

Loyal 1857

Honour to
heroes

1. Gough, p. 282.

News on
May 12

CHAPTER XX

The Mutiny

The outbreak of the Mutiny at Meerut occurred on May 10, 1857, and the news regarding it and the massacre of the Europeans at Delhi, was flashed to Lahore on May 12. It was a thunder bolt from a clear sky. The Punjab was taken completely unaware. John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner was away from Lahore, and no body knew that such a catastrophe was in the making.

John Law-
rence's view

The causes of this out break have baffled investigation, and they may not be given here in detail. A reference may however be made. Sir John Lawrence held firmly, that the Mutiny originated with the army. "As a body," thus did he write, "the Native army did really believe that the universal introduction of cartridges destructive to their caste was only a matter of time. They heard (and believed as they heard) that the measure had been resolved on, and that some sepoys had been punished even by death for refusing to use the objectionable cartridges. They thought, therefore, that their only chance of escape was to band together, to refuse the cartridges, and to resist if force should be attempted by the Government; and the incendiary fires at the different stations were intended by the sepoys as a warning to their officers and to their Government of the feelings which had taken possession of the Native army. Such truly was the origin of the mutiny.¹"

1. Letter on the trial of the King of Delhi, Political, No. 50, dated April 29, 1958.

But this view does not account for the phenomena. In some places, writes Aitchison, "at Muzaffar-nagar, Saharanpur, Farukhabad, and elsewhere-after the success of the military outbreak at Meerut and Delhi, the populace rose before the Sepoys. The leaders, in their proclamation, dwelt much on alleged bad faith, earth-hunger and interference with the Native religions, citing the cartridges as only the last in a series of acts which strained allegiance to the breaking.¹"

Populace
before
seploys

A—The Military Position.

When news regarding the outbreak reached Lahore, the military position in the Punjab was, that from Karnal to Peshawar, whole over the province, there were 36,000 Indian troops of all arms, infantry, regular and irregular, cavalry and artillery. And of these less than 1/4th were Hindustani, of the rest, three being the purely Sikh regiments, namely Regiment No. 14 (Ferozepur Sikhs), Regiment No. 15 (Ludhiana Sikhs), and Regiment No. 45 (Colonel Retray's Sikh regiment.) There were also 9,000 military police, both horse and foot.²

Indian
troops

Besides, there were eleven regiments of European infantry, one of cavalry, and some 2,000 soldiers of the European artillery, the total number of the European soldiers of all arms being 10,500, of which the half were massed at Simla and Peshawar.

Military
police

Of the principal forts and fortresses, that of Lahore was held by European infantry; of Govindgarh and Multan by one European artillery each; while that of Philllore, Attock, Kangra and Nurpur by Indian troops. Of the chief arsenals, that of Ferozepur being held by European infantry and that of Philllore by Indian infantry.

European
soldiers

Of the 800 miles long frontier, bordering throughout fierce tribes, greater part was held by 10,000 irregular

The forts

1. Lord Lawrence, pp. 75—76.

2. Indian Army List, II, 1946, p. 1546

800 miles
frontier

troops, and cavalry, and infantry of the best description, Peshawar being occupied in greater strength.

To Delhi

Immediately after the outbreak had occurred, three regiments of European infantry, one of European cavalry and two of the Indian infantry, marched away to Delhi. The Indian soldiers thus left behind in the Punjab were 33,000, and the Europeans soldiers 7,5000, the proportion of the Indian soldiers to the Europeans being 4½ to 1 thus making the situation precarious.

Position in
Punjab

The Disarming.

At the time of the arrival of the intelligence regarding the outbreak, greater part of the Punjab troops was at Mian Mir, which is very near Lahore. The Chief Commissioner being absent from Lahore, the responsibility to tackle the situation devolved on Montgomery, the Judicial Commissioner, who immediately called a meeting of the senior officers, which decided unanimously that the troops at Mian Mir should be disarmed as soon as possible. Montgomery left for Mian Mir forthwith, where with the help of Brigadier Corbett, the Commander of the Mian Mir Cantonment, disarmament was effected in a very diplomatic manner.

Montgomery
called a
meeting

Disarma-
ment

"The disarming.....was preceded, as was the battle of Waterloo, by a ball. The shadow of events had in no way been allowed to cast its gloom over society. On the evening of 12th a ball and supper was given, while preparations were made in silence, for the morning parade. The regiments to be disarmed had been famous for their achievements in the field, dating from Mysore and Seriengapatam to Ferozshahr and Gujrat. At day-break on the 13th, the troops were all paraded at Mian Mir. The native regiments to be disbanded were four in number, comprising 3,500 men, while there were but three hundred British soldiers, with thirteen guns, to perform

the task. By a clever manoeuvre these forces were brought face to face, the guns and muskets of the British being all loaded, unobserved by the sepoys. This manoeuvre complete, the sepoyes were ordered to pile arms. Nothing was left to them now but to obey. In an instant the danger of mutiny was averted, and the native soldiery were marched off without their arms. Nothing could have been effected in a more orderly or soldier-like manner.¹"

After this, the troops were disarmed at Lahore, Pes-hawar, Nawa Shehr, Multan, Ambala, Jullundur, Rawalpindi, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur and Derajat. The total number of 18 regiments, cavalry and infantry, numbering 13,000 men, were thus disarmed.

Immediate measures were taken to secure the important forts. With the exception of the fort of Noorpur, all the forts, such as that of Gobindgarh (Amritsar), Phillore, Multan and Kangra, were occupied by the European forces within two days or shortly after.

Besides, some other precautions were also taken to check any outbreak. Every District Officer was made alive to the situation. A system of passports was introduced; guards at the ferries were doubled, with orders to prevent the passage of suspicious characters, especially fakirs and mendicants; letters addressed to mutinous regiments were opened; the Native Press was put under censorship; District officers and their assistants did nightly patrol work, and showed themselves more than ever in the remote parts of their Districts; every officer had to be at his post, and no leave of absence was granted except for certified sickness."² All were ready.

'And if some dreadful deed should rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke.'

Diplomatic

Other troops
disarmed

Forts
secured

Other
Precautions

1. Latif, p. 578.

2. Aitchison, p. 79.

Some troops did mutiny

Despite all the measures, however, some Indian troops in the Punjab did mutiny. The Indian troops mutinied at eight different places. Thus, on 14th May, there was an outbreak at Ferozepur, on 21st at Peshawar, on 7th and 8th June at Jullundur, on 7th July at Jhelum, on 9th July at Sialkot, on 30th July at Lahore where being disarmed, the 26th N. I. murdered their Commanding Officer and fled away; on 19th August another N. I. was disarmed at Ferozepur and on 20th August, once again, another N.I. was disarmed at Peshawar. Of all these cases of outbreak and disarming, in five the troops were beaten and destroyed, while in three cases they escaped unhurt. In one case, there was almost a massacre of the Europeans.

Faithful troops

The most faithful troops in the Punjab were : Kelati-Ghilzie Regiment, 21st Regiment of N. I., and seven corps of Irregular Cavalry.

Those sent to Delhi

Those sent to Delhi, to fight the mutineers were, 1st and 2nd European Bengal Fusiliers and H. M.'s 75th Foot, speedily followed by a siege train from Philllore. After this a wing of H. M.'s 8th Foot, a wing of H.M.'S 6th Foot, 4th Sikhs, the 1st Punjab Infantry, 1st Punjab Cavalry and parts of 2nd and 5th Punjab cavalry were sent. Regiment No. 14 (Ferozepur Sikhs) and the Regiment No. 15 (Ludhiana Sikhs) were sent out for the protection of the fort of Muzaffargarh (U.P.), Col. Retray's Sikh regiment (R. No. 45) being already in Bihar to maintain law and order.

More Sikhs recruited

Besides, some more Sikhs were recruited. In the beginning there were only 1900 Sikhs in the troops, while after the new recruitments, the number reached the figure 46,000. On June 8, 1857, a regiment was raised at Lahore Cantonment. Gen. Cortla recruited 500 Sikhs from Ferozepur. One regiment was raised at Ludhiana.

Five to six hundred, mostly Mazhabi Sikhs were also recruited to work as sappers and miners. In addition to this were the cavalry recruitments of Major Hudson. Some 300 artillery men of old Sikh army were enlisted and sent to Delhi. 1200 low-caste Sikhs and a body of horsemen were also sent to Delhi likewise.

In this recruitment, no age bar was imposed. Sixty years old Sikhs, who had fought the British in the battle of Sobraon, were traced out from their villages, and enlisted in the army.

No age bar

In August 1857, the last available European was sent to Delhi. Also sent to Delhi were the 2nd, 4th and 7th Regiments of Punjab Infantry, followed by a first-class siege train from Ferozepur.

Traced out

August 1857

The situation in the Punjab at this time was very critical. Fierce tribes were watching for a chance to pounce upon the British. Large population, though faithful, but speculating whether the English should go or remain. Thirteen hundred sepoys were roaming about and creating trouble. "If, with the last aid, Delhi were not taken, and that speedily, there could then be a struggle not only for European dominion, but even for European existence, within the Punjab.¹"

Situation in
Punjab

B—The Punjab Chiefs and the Frontier Tribes.

On the north and west, Punjab was bounded by Independent Sovereign States, with whom the British had very intimate political relations. On the east, numerous chiefs, although free internally, were under British control. They all remained peaceful.

The North-West.

Dost Mohammad Khan, the Amir of Kabul, remained friendly towards the British and resisted an advice of his chiefs to attack Peshawar. He sent messages of sympathy

Dost
Mohammad
Sympathised

1. Punjab Administration Report, 1856—58.

Hazara and Umd to the British. In Hazara, the chief Jehandad of Umb, remained peaceful. On the Peshawar border, the Punjtar Chief, however, collected some fanatics of Sitana, who could be a source of some trouble. The Afreedees of Khyber, having recently murdered a British officer, Lieutenant Hand, and being punished for that, were in disgrace. Three hundred of them were rather the first to come to be forgiven and allowed to fight for the British. The permission was given.¹

Mohmuds, Afreedees of Kohat, Wuzeerees, Bunnoo, Bozdars, Swat Mohmuds, the old enemies of the British were under blockade. The Afreedees of Kohat were quiet. A recent expedition against Calut Kheyl Wuzeerees and others who had committed in-roads in the British territories, was yet fresh in their mind. And there was no trouble from that side. In Bunnoo District, there was all but quiet. In Derajat, Bozdars who had committed some raids, had been punished by an expedition just in March 1857. In Swat, one of the most dangerous places, civil war broke out just on the day of the Delhi outbreak. No trouble, therefore, could be expected against the British, there as well.

The East.

John's letter Sir John Lawrence issued letters to the Sikh chiefs on July 23: "I would not put up with any delay or hesitation on your part." And among these chiefs the honour of *Rip Van Winkle* was rather, very keenly contested, especially among the States of Patiala, Nabha and Jind.

Jind first Rajah of Jind was actually the first man—European or Native—who took the field against the mutineers. He marched to Karnal with 800 men and secured supplies for the British.² The Maharajah of Patiala supplied

1. Gordon, p, 209.

2. Pb. Admn. Rep. 1856—58.

8 guns and 5,000 men, horse and foot, and occupied the G. T. road, a line of communication for about 120 miles and guarded the stations of Thanesar and Ambala¹. The young Maharaja of Nabha, with his 800 strong, occupied the fort of Ludhiana and escorted the siege train from Phillore. Petty Sikh chiefs, 80 in number, supplied 1,200 men foot and horse.

Nabha

The Chief of Sirmoor and the Raja of Kylore furnished 500 men each. Raja of Busahir, however, remained lukewarm. In the Jullundur Doab, the Raja of Kapurthala furnished 2,000 men. Chief of the Mandi Sate in Kangra Hills, supplied 200 men. Raja of Chamba supplied a strong guard for English ladies at the sanatorium of Dalhousie. The Nawab of Bhawalpur sent no aid. Gulab Singh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, supplied 2,000 men. The contest for helping the British, particularly among the Sikhs, was in fact so keen, that "the petty Sikh chiefs complained of it as a grievance if they were not called on for our service," writes Gordon.²

Sirmoor

Busahir

Kapurthala

Mandi

Chamba

Bhawalpur

Jammu and
Kashmir

Complaints

Dalip Singh

Regarding Dalip Singh, the ex-Maharaja of the Punjab, thus wrote J. S. Login from Castle Menzies in England, on September 30, 1857 : "The Maharaja has certainly no sympathy with the mutinous sepoys, nor any other wish than that we should effectually put them down ... his feelings in our favour (however) are not so strong as to overcome his natural indolence, or to tempt him to read to make many inquiries on the subject of the revolt."³

Moreover, after the outbreaks in India, "Maharaja's return to India had been put a stop to, and he remained in England more for necessity than choice."⁴

Could not
come1. *Ibid*

2. Gordon, pp. 207-8.

3. Lady Login, 'Sir John Login and Duleep Singh', p. 409.

4. *Ibid*, p. 421.

C—The People of the Punjab.

A small number of the people of the Punjab, in which the Sikhs were in yet smaller a number, did help the mutineers. Amongst the leaders of such persons was Bhai Maharaj Singh, who was successor of Bhai Vir Singh Naurangabadia, and who in 1849, having been blamed of rebellious attitude, had been arrested at Adampur, near Jullundur and exiled from the country. In 1854-55, when the other prisoners of war were released, he too, perhaps, was permitted to return. He had a good following in Manjha and lived mainly in Amritsar. On 14th of May, he tried to incite some people openly against the British, but was suppressed, and we do not know what happened to him afterwards.

*Outbreaks,
Murri and
Gugaira*

Yet, as the months passed by, and the news regarding the British failure elsewhere disseminated, the individuals in the Punjab began to think of securing their future positions, in case the Mutiny did succeed. Dreams floated about, not perhaps of nationality, or of restored Sikh commonwealth, but of the possible revival of separate parties, like the original Sikh Misl. At this time, two outbreaks actually occurred. There was an attempted conspiracy in the Murri Hills, occupied by Mohammedan tribes, and an insurrection in the Gugaira District, also thinly populated by Mohammedan tribes. It was all, however, put down in 20 days by 1500 troops, of which only 150 were Europeans.

Had the attempted uprisings not been promptly suppressed, the conspiracy from the Murri hills could easily have spread to Rawalpindi District. And the Gugaira movement was sympathised by kindred tribes of Jhang and Shahpur Districts.

D—Punjab saved the British Empire.

*Punjabis
helped*

Not only, thus, did the five rivers run clear of any serious revolt against the British in Punjab, the people

of the Punjab rather, rendered aid to keep their empire in India, and keep their prestige in the world. A word may here be added, as to how the Punjab helped in the fall of Delhi.

John Lawrence "knew the prestige of Delhi and the spell of the imperial name. Till Delhi was recovered nothing was secure..... the rebellion could not be slain except by a blow at the heart." He therefore wrote to his officers on July 24, 'recollect, if you fall back from Delhi, our case is gone ; neither the Punjab nor anything else can stand.'¹

On May 12, two days after the outbreak at Meerut, the strength of the mutinous forces at Delhi was:

5 Regiments of Indian Infantry =	2,000
1 Regiments of Indian Cavalry =	350
1 Battery of Artillery =	<u>180</u>
	total = 2,530

And of these, two regiments of infantry and one of cavalry, had come from Meerut, while the rest, three regiments of infantry and a battery joined from Delhi. And as the time passed, large numbers of other mutinous soldiers went on joining them.

Bahadur Shah, the ex-Emperor of India, was given several suggestions by the mutineers to take an offensive against the British. A suggestion was also given to him that he should send a large force and occupy the Meerut Cantonment. But although he could not bring himself to agree for an attack on the Meerut Cantonment, he was ultimately prevailed upon to send a huge force and attack the British army which had collected just near Delhi. A strong force was therefore sent under the command of Mirza Abu Bakar, the son of Bahadur Shah, which crossed the Hindoon Bridge on May 25. But the Mirza had not been trained in

Importance
of Delhi

Strength of
mutineers

Suggestions

Abu
attacked
British

1. See Aitchison

the battle-field, nor did he consider a victory against the British, more precious in any way than his life. And therefore, just after a small fight with the British troops, when a ball from an enemy's gun exploded near him, he lost his nerves and heart, and how-so-ever brave his companions might have been, the prince fled the field, thus yielding victory to the British, without properly fighting a battle.

but flee

Re-inforce
ment

Near Subzi-
mandi

Moh. Bakhat
Khan

Shah's
letters

Muslims
collected

This victory gave an encouragement to the British. Meanwhile, in the first week of July, some re-inforcement reached, and the British camp thus being further strengthened, the British forces marched upon Alipur, near Delhi, which was under the control of the rebels. Here again the rebels were commanded by Abu Bakar, who once again fled the field, yielding a very cheap victory to his enemies. The British forces proceeded ahead, and entrenched themselves near Subzimandi.

After fighting these two actions, the rebels took account of their position. Abu Bakar having proved failure, he was replaced in command of the rebels by Mohamad Bakhat Khan. But in the meanwhile dissensions arose among the rebels themselves, between Hindus and the Muslims. Soon after, however, better reasons prevailed and burying their differences; both Hindus and the Muslims swore loyalty to the Shah, who was once again prevailed upon to send a strong force and attack the British near Subzimandi. But before the force against the British could be sent, the Shah addressed letters to different princes, among them being the rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Alwar, Gwalior and Patiala, requesting them to help and promising to establish some sort of joint government in India, in case they succeeded in their common venture. Hopes arose high as the preparations went apace. About 10,000 Muslims collected at Kashmere gate: to receive the Shah, to hear his determined plans

and to see rosy pictures of the future that he was expected to paint. But the Shah did not arrive at the fixed time. He had received no encouraging reply from any of the princes he had addressed, and in the meanwhile, stringent financial position had started seriously telling upon him. He was loosing his heart and failed to reach the Kashmere gate. After vainly waiting for a long time, the people dispersed with serious doubts in their minds. Their hopes of seeing the Muslim rule re-established at Delhi, had perhaps been shattered.

Disappointed

In the meanwhile, Colonel Hudson had been able to purchase some rebel officials, and through his contrivances there occurred a big explosion in the ammunition store of the Shah, destroying those as well, who had been purchased.¹

Hudson's contrivances

By the first week of September, huge re-inforcements from Punjab, Bengal and Bombay, reached the British at Delhi. The rebel total had also reached at, Delhi, the high figure of 40,000 men. On September 6, commanded by Brig. Gen. Nicholson, Brig. Johnes, Maj. Reed, Brig. Longfield and Col. Campbell, the British troops surrounded Delhi from all the four sides. The British forces at this time, also included Punjab Infantry, the 4th Regiment, Raja Sarup Singh of Jind's force and the Dogra Regiments of Jammu.

Re-inforcements

The intititative was taken by the Dogras, who, attacked the rebels at one point, but were defeated. From September 6 to September 15, the Sikhs attacked the rebels at several places, and won many small actions against them. Being encouraged by these small victories, commanded by Gen. Nicholson, the Sikhs pushed their guns ahead, and started bombarding from the Kashmere gate, even upto the walls of Red Fort. The rebels fought

Delhi surrounded

Dogras defeated

Sikhs succeeded

1. See C. T. Metcalf, 'The Mutiny in Delhi' (1898), p. 68.

with all their might, but were ultimately defeated, and the Sikhs entered Delhi victoriously, and thus the imperial city fell into the British hands.

Delhi fell

Between September 16 and 19, the entire city of Delhi was evacuated, "Delhi after the capture became like a city of the dead. Not an inhabitant remained. An eye witness describing it says that for miles not a creature was to be seen save a half-strayed cat."¹ The Shah having vacated the fort, along with his queen and his sons, took refuge in Hamayun's tomb. He was followed up by Hudson, who with the help of Mirza Ilahi Bakhsh, was able to capture him. Princes Mirza Mughal, Mirza Khizr Sultan and Mirza Abu Bakar were also captured and shot dead. To complete the story Queen and the Shah were brought back to the Red Fort, they were tried, and ultimately exiled to Rangoon, where shortly after, the Shah died.

Hindus back

After capturing the city, the European artillery was quartered in Arbic College, and the Great Mosque of Shah Jehan became a barrack for the Sikhs. The Hindus were allowed to come back to Delhi after a time, but not till 1859 was the attachment taken off the houses of the Mohammedans.

Muslims
1859

Rewards
distributed

Some rewards were distributed. Amongst the chiefs of Delhi, Nawab of Jhajjar, Raja of Balbghar and Rais Chadri, were hanged, and their territories being confiscated, they were distributed among the loyal chiefs, the Maharaja of Patiala getting Narnoul; Maharaja of Nabha, the territory of Bawal Kauti and the Maharaja Jind that of Dadri. The other minor Sikh chiefs and soldiers were also suitably rewarded.

More Sikhs
recruited

Before the fall of Delhi, the Sikhs had not recruited themselves in the British forces, in very great numbers,

1. Aitchison, p. 101.

the Border Pathans being the first in the Punjab to flock to the British standard. But after the imperial city had fallen, great number of Sikhs began to enlist themselves into the British forces. "The effect of the fall of Delhi was instanteneons.....Rich merchants began to apologise for not having subscribed to the loan. Fair-weather friends came to the front with their congratulations. Our prestige stood higher than ever." Thus writes an English man.

After Delhi had fallen, it was not difficult to capture rest of the rebel positions in India. And it was not long before a perfect peace was restored in the country.

The province of the Punjab itself was rewarded. By a resolution of the government of India dated February 9, 1858, and by a subsequent enactment, the Delhi territory was formally separated from the North West Provinces (now U. P.) and attached to Punjab, under the administration of Sir John Lawrence. The Punjab thus got added to it an area of 12,674 square miles with the population of 33,57,817, and the annual land revenue of £2,75,000. The revenue from other sources being 3,50,000.

After peace had been established, Lord Canning addressed at Lahore the chiefs of the Punjab, "In other parts of India I have received many distinguished chiefs of ancient lineage who have proved themselves faithful feudatories of the Crown and many of lower degree who have been dutiful subjects in the midst of great discouragements and danger, but in the Punjab I find a whole nation of brave and loyal men." And His Royal Highness, Prince Albert Victor of Wales, on his visit to Lahore in 1890 said." There is no province in India that can boast, as the Punjab can, that it is bulwark of defence against foreign aggression, or that can be termed with the same significance the guard-room of the Eastern Empire."¹

Perfect
peace

Delhi to
Punjab

Canning
said

Prince of
Wales

1. See Gordon, pp. 219, 236.

Bore privations

The Punjab Administration Report of 1856-58 commented that if Delhi had not fallen just in time, there should have been serious consequences for the British not only in rest of India, where the rebels had already broken out, but in the Punjab itself, where the general population was just watching these events. The Punjab troops saved India for the British, for whom they "bore the privations, the fatigues, the perils, of the ridge before Delhi and shared in the final conflict within the city walls.¹"

Khalsa's loyalty.

And commenting upon the part played by the Khalsa troops particularly, thus wrote Gordon: "though the Khalsa has ceased to be a political power, it has entwined its military force with a strong chord of loyalty and sympathy for the British Crown.²"

E—Why was the Punjab Loyal?

Punjabis condemned

Much has been said and written regarding the part played by the Punjab, and more particularly by the Sikhs, in the Mutiny. The Punjabis have been condemned, and termed as traitors, but few writers have tried to study the causes and the factors which led them play the part, and which in a way may explain their attitude in the subject.

The causes

There were causes, very much human which automatically led the Punjabis to do what they did. The Punjab had been enslaved by the British, with the help of the Hindustani troops. Not un-naturally, therefore, the Punjabis harboured an ill-will towards them. Moreover, the Poorbiyas soldiers had been looking down upon the Punjabis for the reason that they considered themselves to be superior, having been in the British service for comparatively a longer time, and thereby, for being more experienced in the respect. An understanding had not yet been reached between the two, after the annexation of the

1. Pb. Admin. Report, 1856-58.

2. Gordon (1904), p. 222.

Punjab, when the Mutiny broke out. And since the disturbance had its origin in the Hindustani troops, it was not much sympathised by the Punjabis.

Moreover, the Sikhs had a grudge against Delhi, where their 9th Guru Tegh Bahadur had been put to death. They had an ambition to destroy the city where Banda Bahadur and his followers had sacrificed their lives. And this was fully exploited by the British. A poster was actually seen on the walls of Delhi, where-in a proclamation of Bahadur Shah was given that the Sikhs be massacred wherever they were found. It seemed to have been the work of some British hand. And again, during the two Anglo-Sikh wars, the Shah of Delhi and one of his chiefs, the Nawab of Jhajjar, had given every aid to the British against the Sikhs. And a good portion of the spoils of the Lahore Darbar had gone to the Shah's palace, either through purchases or through some other means. The Timur family which led the Mutiny, had been traditional enemy of the Sikhs. The fifth, the ninth and the tenth Guru and his children, all had sacrificed their lives against them. Here was a chance for the Sikhs to take a vengeance.

The Sikhs had been fond of plunders and they had for some generations been coveting the spoils of the imperial city.

And again the British victories of Sabraon and Gujerat had yet been fresh in their minds. They also remembered, how some of the troops in the Punjab had been disarmed and how those who had rebelled, had been slain. They had, therefore, a confidence in the British against a confused mass of mutineers with ill-planned and the ill-planned strategy.

The people of the Punjab had been completely disarmed by the British and they had been getting disused to warlike pursuits, which had not paid them much.

The grudge

A poster

The Shah

Timur family

Delhi spoils

British Victories

Disarmed

People

Loved peace

They had seen peace in the country, after years of confusion and warfare, and they were not very much prepared to exchange it for an unsettled future. The Hindus and Muslims, both detested each other. And the rule of the one, would hardly be tolerated by the other.

Abundant harvest

And then, fortunately for the British, there was an abundant harvest in the Punjab at that time. The Punjab had been blessed with bumper crops successively for three years. The trade was flourishing, and thanks to the efforts of Lawrence brothers, there was general comfort and prosperity in the province and no exciting grievances against the Government.

Paid regularly

The newly recruited soldiers had been paid regularly, had sent their savings home, harvests were rich and prices low. All were satisfied and contented. And again, thousands of the Punjabi soldiers had been posted in other provinces, to maintain law and order and for other duties. Large sums of their prize-money and the savings had been disbursed in this province. And this, besides material gains, gave them a sense of having a triumph over the Hindustanis, under the British.

Sense of triumph

The spirited, brave and illustrious followers of the Khalsa, who had fought so bravely against the Mughal slavery and who had rolled the flood of Durrani invasions across the Indus, should not have failed to take up a chance against the British, if they had understood the significance of the uprisings. The British had brought to them all benefits of a settled Government. There was peace in the country and prosperity in the making. But they had not yet fully realised the British slavery that the Mutiny of 1857 broke out. Had the Mutiny come a few years later, they should not have failed to contribute their part for its success.

Some violent changes had taken place in the Punjab. "For good the old order changed, giving place to the new. Security for life and property following on disarmament soon reigned throughout the land. The growth of material prosperity among the people diverted their minds from the stormy past to assured hope of justice, peace, and plenty under a strong Government—to the protection afforded for the development of the many good qualities in them. Oppressive taxation was abolished, the land tax reduced¹ far below what it formerly was.....Roads were made throughout the length and breadth of the province, and canals set agoing which made the waste places to blossom.....It was this firm foundation on which the Punjab administration was built that enabled it to weather the storm which beat so furiously on it in 1857."²"

A good administration

And then, there was no leader in the Punjab, ready at hand. Most of those who remained, benefitted from the British rule. Chuttur Singh and Sher Singh had just in January, 1854, been released from the state-prisons, and were granted a pension of Rs. 8,000 per annum each. And similar was the case with several others. They were naturally not prepared to exchange peace and a steady financial position for a trouble.

No leader

And then, the belief that Nana Sahib and Rani Jhansi, too, were fighting for a national interest in view, has since been broken. There are facts to prove that all these so called leaders of the war of National Independence, had in fact no real love for their declared cause. In the very thick of the disturbances, when the ignorant masses of India, were fighting, the battles of their life

So called national leaders;

1. See Chapter on Financial Administration.

2. Gordon, 202—204.

and death. These leaders made approaches to the British authorities for favourable consideration of their claims, which were rejected. Had their claims been accepted, they should in no case have failed to prove Lal Singhs and Tej Singhs of the Anglo-Sikh war, deserting their kinsfolk to be slaughtered in the battle fields, while they fled to the promised British security.¹

No uniformity

In fact, no national war of independence was being fought in India. There was no uniformity of purpose and no unity of aim. Nor were grievances of the people the same throughout. Some were fighting for their snatched principalities while others were fighting for an injury against their religious prejudices. Most of them fought, just for the sake of a fight against an alien rule, knowing little as to what would they get in case of their victory. Some fought for the restoration of a Mohammedan rule while others for a Hindu one. And it can hardly be denied that success of the mutineers should have brought in its train only chaos and civil war, resulting in another slavery, either that of the British or some other power. And not few of the reasoning minds in the Punjab understood it.

A chaos

British under-estimated

Nor can it be conclusively held, that had the Punjab helped the mutineers, they should definitely have succeeded. It was easy to under-estimate the British. The English resources indeed were inexhaustible. Providentially for the British, "the Persian war was over and the troops were returning bringing Outram and Havelock. Then there was the China force²," which

Their strength

1. See Nana's letter to Queen etc. Foreign, Political Proceedings 63—70, May 27, 1859.

2. Aitchison, p. 85.

could easily be diverted to India. The English had a complete command over the sea, and their naval forces and their power in England—particularly when it was a question of prestige for the British, not only in India but in Europe and whole over the world--could hardly be challenged by a chaos and civil war resulting the victory of the Indians. The Punjab did not participate in the Mutiny.

CHAPTER XXI

Socio-Cultural Movements in the Punjab

The causes

There were special conditions in the Punjab during the later half of the 19th Century, which led to the organisation in the Province of several socio-cultural movements. For centuries together, the brave and illustrious people of the Punjab had lived a life only of tumult and commotion. But when a strong hand of the British, had settled itself upon the country, the only possible outlet for their aspirations and expression was the organisation of peaceful movements, aiming only at social and cultural development of the people. Moreover, as the time passed, the liberal ideas of the West had their way into the country. Industrial revolution was taking place in England. The newly brought out British literature drank deep into the plans for liberal and cultural developments in that country. And not few of this country who visited England were inspired and enthused with this spirit of the West and brought its affect in their own mother-land. The new schools and other educational institutions, established in the Punjab, after its annexation, also played their part, in bringing the people closer to English thought and literature. Much of the enthusiasm shown by the British regime and their reforming zeal, had slackened after the Mutiny. But the initiative had been taken, and the people took the charge in their own hands.

Programme

Many important movements were thus organised, some of which originated in the province itself, while others travelled into it from other parts of India. Majority of these movements had a programme of reconstruction in

social and religious spheres. In majority of the cases, religion was the basic source of inspiration, and this was very much natural too. When the well-meaning people of this country came in contact with the glories of the western thought, lest they felt inferior, they had to dig for glories in their own past, and bring them to surface. The subject remained Indian, while the affect was western and the product in majority of the cases, therefore, was a mixture of the two; in one case the balance going towards one side, while in another towards the other.

Inspiration

The product

A—Movements Among the Hindus

Consistent with the fact that Hinduism was a social rather than a religious system, "whereas Islam tended to develop the old sects and throw off new ones, Hinduism confined its activity mainly to the semi-social movements."¹

The character

Brahmo Samaj—(I)

Of the various movements among the Hindus, which originated or travelled into the province, the first was the Brahmo Samaj. The movement had been founded in Bengal in 1828, by Raja Ram Mohan Rai, "the pioneer of all living advance, religious, social and educational in the Hindu community during the nineteenth century." Born in 1771, in his early years, the Raja fell under the influence of Christian Missionaries, and in 1820, published a remarkable book "the Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness," in which he declared that he found "the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles and better adapted for the use of rational beings than any other which have come to my knowledge." The influence of the Christian Missionaries, however, could not hold the Raja for long. Soon after, he developed a controversy with them, and not being satisfied with his

Founded 1828

Raja Ram
Mohan Rai,Christian
influence

1. Census Report of Punjab, 1901, p. 115.

Died 1833

newly adopted faith; he came back to Hinduism, and founded the Brahmo Samaj. He died in 1833.

A branch at
Lahore,
1864

The Samaj introduced itself in the Punjab only after the Mutiny. A branch of the Samaj was established at Lahore in 1864, and by 1872, it had its own temple in Anarkali.

Their Principles and Methods.

The prayers of the Brahmos were somewhat after English Church, and were addressed to Brahma, the one God, the chief purport being that all, including Hindus, Christians and Mohammedans might be converted to Him and become Brahmos. The Brahmos were said to have been opposed to Vedas and all scriptures which could be interpreted to support poly-theism. They did not believe in transmigration and they condemned idol worship. Nor did they believe in caste system. No body was born high or low, it was only one's action which made him one or the other.

Social
programme

In their social programme, the Brahmos did all that they could, to advance education in the country. They believed in freedom of thought and expression, and journalistic freedom was one of their most cardinal principles.

Absorbed

The Movement, however, could not find much success in the Punjab. It was confined only to Lahore and Simla, and at these places too, it seems to have been overwhelmed and absorbed by Arya Samaj.¹

Chet Ramis—(II)

Founded
1865

The movement was founded by a person named Chet Ram, in 1865. Born at Sharakpur in Lahore District, in 1835, Chet Ram was a man of very little education, being able to read and write only Lunda characters. He died in 1895, after which, his daughter was installed on the 'Gadi'.

Chet Ram

1. Censes, 1901, p. 172.

The movement, in its beliefs and doings, depicted a strange influence of Christianity. Its founder, Chet Ram, had an implicit faith in Christ as the only God. And his disciples were to wear a copy of bible, each round his neck. They also carried, each, a long rod with a cross at its head. The front portion of the horizontal part of the rod, carried the inscription :

Christian influence

'Help; O Jesus Christ, Holy Ghost, God ! Read the Bible and the Gospels for salvation—(Chet Ramis)'

The Chet Ramis usually belonged to poorer classes of the province, and were met with in Ferozepur, Lahore, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Montgomery districts. According to the dictation of the founder, forty of his followers were always to persist upon alms and preach about the teachings of their faith. They were to remain celibate all their lives.

Met with

The number of the followers of Chet Ram, seemed to be increasing in the first quarter of the 20th century. But the caste prejudices of those who joined the movement remained intact. The Mohammedan converts did not mix up with the Hindu converts.

Progress

The Arya Samaj—III

A short distance from the North Western coast of the Indian Peninsula, Dayanand the founder of the movement was born in 1824, in the prosperous town of Marvi, in Kathiawar. His father, a Brahmin of the highest order, held a respectable post in the Government of the State and was "a rigid, austere Brahmin, thoroughly orthodox and uncompromising in his religious beliefs and practices.....His mother, on the other hand, was the personification of sweetness, gentleness, and goodness."¹

Dayanand founder, born 1824

Educational of Dayanand, whose original name was Mul Shankar, commenced when he was five years of age,

His education

1. Laipat Rai, 'The Arya Samaj,' p. 4.

and he was invested with the sacred thread in his eighth year. His father himself assumed the role of a teacher for him, but the son seemed to have been a born rebel, agianst the authority of his father, and it was the father's piously-intended insistence, upon his son's observing the fast of Shivratri, which turned the son "into the most virulent and successful opponent of image-worship of his time," at the age of fourteen. Death of his beloved sister, had turned the young boy's attention towards investigation into the mysteries of birth and death. Death of his beloved uncle, who had rocked him in his lap, often times, distracted him at the age of nineteen, and he was told on his anxious enquiries, that *yogabhyas* was the method, by which he could understand the mystery. But the *yoga*, as he understood, could not be mastered till he left his home.

Deaths

Plan to marry

Further education

Fled

Wandering
15 years

Father of the boy, already having reason to suspect the workings of his son's mind, decided to weave a web of affection round him but Dayanand resisted his parent's plan with determination and declined to be married. The marriage was postponed for a year, at the intercession of friends. The boy's proposal that he should be sent to Kashi, the Rome of Hindus, for further education, having been rejected, he was sent to a learned theologian, in a neighbouring village, for the purpose. But this could not satisfy the boy, who was recalled, and the day for his wedding fixed. But a week or so before the fixed date, the boy fled from home, and became a *Sadhu*. He was soon, however traced out and imprisoned under a strong guard. The same night, the boy succeeded once again in escaping, and this time for good, never seeing his father again.

After leaving the home, the second time assuming the ochre-coloured garments and changing his name, for full fifteen years, "from 1845 to 1860, young Dayananda

wandered North; South, East, and West, almost all over India, in pursuit of knowledge and truth..... In search of teachers of fame and yogis of merit he penetrated into the innermost recesses of the Himalayas..... He crossed and recrossed the valleys of the noblest of Indian rivers, Ganges, the Jamuna, and the Narbadda, and mounted the highest accessible tops of the hills near or in the vicinity of the sources of those rivers.¹ It was here that he delved deep into the mysteries of the nature. After studying for over thirty years, he acquired finishing touches to his education when he waited for two years and a half on Virja Nanda, a master spirit.

Delved deep

Founded
1875

Lahore 1877

Satyarth
Prakash,
1874

Died 1883

After this he entered into public life, visiting some of the most important towns of what is now known as U.P., preaching and teaching about his philosophy. It was on April 10, 1875, that he founded the movement, establishing the first Arya Samaj at Bombay^a. At Lahore, the Samaj was established in 1877, and it was this place which became its centre and where its principles received their final shape. From 1877 to 1883, Swami Daya Nand spent his time in "preaching and teaching and writing books, as well as in establishing and organising Arya Samajes throughout India." He met with the greatest success in Punjab, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Rajputana and Gujerat. Like Brahmo Samaj, Daya Nand's speeches were delivered in Hindi. The Swami finished the compilation of his Satyarth Prakash in 1874. For sometime, there was a talk between him and Madame Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society, for a union between the two societies. But it failed. The Swami died on October 30, 1883, at Ajmere, as a result of the slow affect of a subtle poison, administered to him mixed in his food, by a Muslim concubine of Maharana

1. Lajpat Rai, p 18.

(a) Imperial Gazetteer of India, i, p. 51.

Sajjan Singh of Jodhpur. The Swami had gone there as invited by the Maharana, and had taken a strong exception to his living with this concubine.

General beliefs

A note may here be added regarding some general beliefs of the Swami, on the basis of which, the principles of the Samaj were drawn. The Swami believed that some persons might have more of the divine in them in proportion to what others have. But this should in no way mean that they are same as God. In fact, he held, no man is infallible, however exalted he may be. The only approved forms of worship, according to him, are stuti—contemplation, Prarthana—Communion and Upasana—Prayer. And the only approved form of expiation is repentance with a determination not sin again. The Swami believed in Karma, and therefore in transmigration. He believed in Fate only as much as confounded with the doctrine of Karma, and not beyond that. The man has the power, if he has the will, to make or unmake his destiny. Although due respect should be given to the living parents, there is no need of ancestor-worship. Vedas are infallible and inexhaustible source of all knowledge. The Swami did not believe in polytheism, nor did he have a belief in pantheism. Yet he believed that although God was distinct from the world, he was immanent in it as the principle of its life and existence. God never incarnates though Brahma, Vishnu and Siva etc., who are only Devtas, do. He had no belief in the mythology of Puranas and condemned caste system, which according to him, had been a source of many other evils in the Hindu society. Nobody is born Brahman or born Sudra. Sudra is he who does evil, and Brahman is he who does good.

God and man

Worship

expiation

Karma

Respect to parents

Vedas

God never incarnates.

Low and high

God and Soul

God and Soul, according to him, are two distinct entities, each having certain attributes of its own. Yet they are inseparable and are related to each other as Pervader and the Pervaded. Three things are eternal : God, Soul and Prakriti. "The purpose of creation is the essential and natural exercise of the creative energy of the Deity. A person once asked some one : 'What is the purpose of the eyes ?' Why, to see with, to be sure,' was the reply. The same is the case here. God's creative energy must have play, and the Souls must reap the fruits of their Karma."

Transmigration

The transmigration, or earthly bondage of Soul has a cause. Cause is ignorance, which is a source of all sin. The freedom of Soul from suffering thus, is its salvation. But salvation lasts only for a period, on the expiration of which, the Soul assumes the body again.

Devas, virtues

Devas are those who are wise. Virtuous activity is superior to passive resignation. The other creatures should be treated in the same manner as one himself would like to be treated. Swarga is nothing but state of happiness in which Soul lives as a result of good actions. Narka is the State of pain.

Swarga and Narka

"All truth must satisfy five tests : (1) It must not militate against the nature and attributes of God; (2) It must not be opposed to the teaching of the Vedas; (3) It must stand the test of the well-known eight kinds of proofs based on natural laws; it must have the sanction of 'apt purshas' (i. e., men learned, true and holy); and lastly (5) It must be in consonance with the dictates of one's own conscience. Every doctrine must be subjected to these five tests, and accepted if it fulfils them."

The truth

The true teacher

The true pupil

The true teacher is he who can teach the science of the Vedas and their commentaries. And true pupil is he who is devoted to the teacher, and is eager to learn; whose character is unassailable and whose capacity is

strong enough to assimilate knowledge and grasp truth. The term Guru applies to all those through whom mind is weaned from falsehood and it includes father, mother and preceptor.¹

Aryas'
watchword

Watchword of the Aryas was 'Back to the Veda's' which are perfect and source of all sciences and knowledge. There could be no historical or temporal reference to them.

Ten
Niyamas

The Qualifications of a Member

A person, as it was laid down by the Swami, must subscribe to the following ten Niyamas—or principles, before he can become a member of the Samaj.

1. God is primary cause of all true knowledge.
2. God is all—truth, all—knowledge.....Un — begotten. Infinite.....and the cause of the universe. To Him alone worship is due.
3. Vedas are the Books of true knowledge Every Arya must read them.
4. Arya should always be ready to accept truth and renounce untruth.
5. All actions must conform to virtue and be performed after thorough study of right and wrong.
6. Primary work of Samaj is to benefit the whole world by improving physical, spiritual and social conditions of the people.
7. All should be treated with love and due regard to their merit.
8. Ignorance must be dispelled and knowledge diffused.
9. Every one is to consider his own good to be included in that of the others.

1. These beliefs of the Swami are given at the end of his book 'Satyarth Prakash', and are quoted by Lajpat Rai, pp. 88—89.

10. In personal affairs, all are to have freedom, but no person is to stand in way of the general good.

Religious Observances.

Every member should observe the following five *Mahayajnas*

1. *Brahma Yajna*, which is twofold:

a—Sandhya or worship of God every morning and every evening.

Five Maha-yajnas

b—Swadhyae or regular reading of portions of scripture every day.

2. The day is to be begun with *Dev. Yajna*—the well-known Homa or burning of Ghi.

3. *Pitri yajna*—or some sort of daily service to parents.

4. *Atithi yajna*—or the feeding of some ascetic or a learned man.

5. *Balivaishwa deva yajna*—or a duty towards poor, and helpless persons and towards domestic animals.

Main Programmes and Activities in Punjab.

The basic principles¹ on which the social ideas of the Samaj were based were : 1—Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. 2—Equality of sexes. 3—Absolute justice and fair play between man and man, and nation and nation. Equal opportunities to all according to their nature, Karma and merit. And 4—Love and charity towards all.

Basic Principles

The social activities of the Aryas among Hindus, in practice, as commented upon by Mr. Valentine Chirol in 1910, were praiseworthy. "The influence has been constantly exerted to check the marriages between mere boys and almost infant girls which have done so much physical as well as moral mischief to Hindu society, and also to improve the wretched lot of Hindu widows

V. Chirol.

1. Census 1901, p. 116.

whose widowhood with all that it entails of menial degradation often begins before they have ever really been wives. To this end the Aryas have not hesitated to encourage female education, and the girls' Orphanage at Jullundar, where there is also a widow's home, has shown what excellent social results can be achieved in that direction. Again in the treatment of the "untouchable" low-castes, the Arya Samaj may claim to have been the first native body to break new ground and to attempt something akin to the work of social reclamation of which Christianity and in a lesser degree, Islam had hitherto had the monopoly. Schools and especially industrial classes have been established in various districts which can not fail to raise the status of the younger generation and gradually to emancipate the lower castes from the bondage in which they have been hitherto held¹.

Orphanages

The first Hindu Orphanage was established by the Arya Samaj at Ferozepur, in the Punjab, during the life time of the Swami, with a splendid and commodious building. Later on a number of other orphanages on similar lines were established at different places in the Northern India.

Famine Reliefs

In 1897-98, there were very severe famines in the country. A very commendable service was rendered by the Samaj in organising relief of distress. Thousands of children were rescued and for them several new orphanages opened in the Punjab. In 1908, famine relief was organised in the United Provinces. The famine relief included different kinds of other social service as well. Organisation of medical relief in the time of pestilence, nursing the sick and helping in the disposal of the dead. The Samaj also organised a large scale relief in the Kangra Valley in 1904, at the time of the great earthquake.

Medical Relief Disposal of dead

1. V. Chirol, 'Indian Unrest' (1910), pp. 110-111.

The Educational Field

Besides, one of the most interesting programmes of the Samaj was to weld together the educated and uneducated by encouraging the study of national languages of spiritual truth and by insisting on study of classical Sanskrit. Formation of sound and energetic habits by a regulated mode of living. The encouragement of a sound acquaintance with English literature and material progress of the country by spreading knowledge of physical and applied sciences¹. And in this again, the Samaj had a considerable success.

The Programme

Daya Nanda Anglo-Vedic College.

The Daya Nanda Anglo-Vedic College, which was described by the Punjab Administration Report of 1901-02, as "one of the most interesting educational enterprises in Northern India," was opened at Lahore in June, 1889. The idea regarding it had been originated by the Swami himself. Giving an account of a meeting called by Lahore Arya Samaj on November 9, 1883, after the death of the Swami, thus wrote the Arya Patrika of June 20, 1885, "there was one united purpose that the glorious life of the departed Swami should be immortalised, and the proposal to found an Anglo-Vedic College in honour of his memory was unanimously adopted. The sight that followed was worth observing. Though the meeting was composed mostly of middle-class men, from 7,000 to 8000 rupees were subscribed on the spot. Women and children and even poor menials zealously came forward with their mite". The declared purpose of the college was to be to (a) "encourage, improve and enforce the study of Hindu literature. (b) To encourage and enforce the study of classical Sanskrit and of the Vedas. (c) To encourage and enforce the study of English literature; and sciences both theoretical and applied."

Interesting enterprise

People's interest

1. Preamble of a draft scheme reg. D.A.V. College, Lahore, circulated for public discussion in 1885.

Opened 1889

The Progress

The split

The Gurukula

V. Chirol on Gurukula

The system

The school department of this institution was opened in June 1886, and the College department in June, 1889. The progress of the institution was so fast, that on Dec. 31, 1913, the total number of students on the school rolls was 1,737, while that on the College rolls was 903. Soon a D.A.V. College at Jullundur, another at Hoshiarpur and the third at Cawnpore in U. P. were added, and the total amount of funds, at the disposal of the D. A. V. College movement on March 31, 1929, was Rs. 26,51,206—10—0.

The Gurkula.

In 1892, the Samaj was divided into two sections, which differed in the lines on which the D.A.V. College of Lahore was to be run. The difference of opinion was whether English, science, or the Vedas, should be given first place in the institution. Those who held the latter opinion, were termed as religious fanatics and debarred from the management of the college. But they, in order to put their ideas into practice, started a new institution, three miles below Hardwar, and named it as Gurukula. The Gurukula was established in 1902, as a result of the efforts chiefly of Munshi Ram, formerly a successful pleader of Jullundur.

Regarding the Gurukula, again, the views of V. Chirol may be quoted. "Under the system the child is committed at an early age to the exclusive care of a spiritual teacher or guru, who stands to him in *loco parentis* and even more.. In the gurukulas or seminaries founded by the Arya Samaj pupils or chelas are admitted between the ages of six and ten. From that moment they are practically cut off from the outer world during the whole course of their studies, which cover a period of 16 years altogether—i.e., ten years in the lower school and six years in the upper, to which they pass up as *Brahmancharis*. During the whole of that period no student is allowed to

visit his family, except in cases of grave emergency, and his parents can only see him with the permission of the head of the *gurukul* and not more than once a month. There are at present (1910) three *gurukuls* in the Punjab, but the most important one, with over 250 students, is at Kangri.¹

Sir James Meston the Lieutenant Governor of U. P. who visited the institution March 16, 1913, remarked: "The Gurukula is one of the most original and interesting experiments carried on in these provinces, in fact in the whole of India."

Sir J.
Meston's
view

Constitution of the Samaj.

There is a regular constitution of the Samaj, under which Vedas alone are to be regarded as absolute authority. The rules There is to be a principal Arya Samaj in each province, with its branches. Every Principal Samaj must have library of Vedic works in Sanskrit and Arya-bhasha, and a weekly named 'Arya Parkash'. Members of the staff should be truth-loving and of pure character. The members, particularly the unmarried ones must give their spare time to the Samaj activities. President of the Samaj, its Secretary and other members are to meet every 8th day. In the meetings, the members would sing the hymns of Sama Veda, and have discussion without bias. The members must pay one per cent of their income to the Samaj. They should worship only in Vedic manners. The Samaj should perform Vedic sanskaras, and teach Vedas in Arya Vidyalas. The Samaj should give attention to uplift the country, both spiritually and materially, and send learned men to preach among the people. The President and other members of the Samaj should free their minds from pride. Only those who conform to the principles and live a pure life, should be admitted to higher

1. V. Chirol, pp. 114—115.

circle from ordinary membership. On every occasion, such as marriage, a member should make a donation to the Samaj. An addition or an amendment can be made in the rules after thorough deliberations.

The Organisation

Membership

An effective member must accept the ten Niyamas, pay one percent of his income to the Samaj and attend its meetings regularly. A Samaj having atleast ten effective members, is entitled to send its representatives to the Provincial Assembly.

Executive Committee

Each Samaj should have an executive committee, consisting of five officials, elected by the vote of effective members. The five officials are to be—President, Vice-President, Secretary, Accountant and a Librarian. It should have its own meeting place and a splendid building for the purpose.

Provincial Assembly

Each province is to have a Provincial Assembly, in which the Samajes would send their representatives in proportion to their effective members. The Provincial Assembly can change rules of management, it can organise propaganda, should run one or more papers, raise funds and manage provincial educational institutions etc. Members of the Assembly are to be elected after every three years, but the officials would be elected every year.

All India Assembly

There would be an All India Assembly formed by the representatives of different provincial assemblies.

The Progress

In 1928, the Samaj had the following two All India Organisations. 1—The Sarva Deshak Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, and 2—The Paropkarni Sabha founded by the Swami himself. It had nine Provincial Assemblies. The number of the Samajes whole over the country, on the provincial basis, were as follows:—

Two all India organisations

Punjab	—	500
U. P.	—	413
Delhi	—	200
C.P. & Berar	—	52
Ajmer	—	100
Bombay	—	30
Bengal & Bihar	—	20
Burma	—	10

Besides there were Samajes outside India.

The Samaj of Swami Dayanand was rendering a great service to the country, but as the Punjab Census Report of 1901 remarked, unfortunately its leaders were too much after keeping their reforms within the Hindu society. The principles of Fatherhood of God and absolute fair play between man and man and nation and nation, applied only within the Hindu community, outside of which they had no play.¹

The Imperial Paper of Lahore, wrote in its issue of October 3, 1888, that the Aryas were inciting their members against Muslims and advising them to avenge themselves upon that community, because they believed that all the evils, such as child-marriage and purdah, were products of the Muslim rule in India.²

The Akhbar-i-Am wrote in its issue dated February 23, 1889, that some Aryas had spoken against Sikh Gurus and that somebody had published Granth Sahib full of mistakes. The Sikhs were getting very much exercised over it.³ And Ravi, in its issue dated August 7, 1889, wrote that somebody had written a book Granthi phobia, injuring the feelings of the Sikhs.⁴

A Survey

Census
Report 1901

Imperial
Paper

Akhbar i-Am

Ravi

1. Census 1901, p. 115.

2. Home, Secret, Native Papers Reports, 1888, p. 247.

3. Home, Secret, N.P.R., 1889, p. 247.

4. Ibid, p. 324.

V. Chirol.

The "ethical code" of Swami Dayanand, thus wrote Valentine Chirol, "on the other hand, was vague, and he pandered strangely in some directions to the weaknesses of the flesh, and in others to popular prejudices. Nothing in the Vedas, for instance, prohibits either the killing of cattle or the eating of bovine flesh. But, in deference to one of the most universal of Hindu superstitions, Dayanand did not hesitate to include cow-killing amongst the deadliest sins. Here we have in fact the keynote of his doctrines. The sanctity of the cow is the touch-stone of Hindu hostility to both Christian and Mohammedan, and the whole drift of Dayanand's teachings is far less to reform Hinduism than to rouse it into active resistance to the alien influences which threatened, in his opinion, to denationalise it. Hence the outrageously aggressive tone of his writings wherever he alludes either to Christianity or to Mohammedanism. It is the advent of 'meat-eating and wine-drinking foreigners, the slaughterers of kine and other animals,' that has brought "trouble and suffering" upon "the Aryas"—he discards the word Hindu on account of its Persian origin—whilst before they came into the country, India enjoyed "golden days," and her people were "free from disease," and prosperous and contented." In fact, "Arya for the Aryans" was the cry that frequently predominated in Dayanand's teachings over that of "Back to the Vedas....."

Popular
among
Hindus

Membership

Yet among Hindus, the Movement was getting popular as the time passed. In 1911, its membership stood at 2,43,000, and this was two and a half times as much as what was in 1901, and six times as much as that of 1891.

1. V. Chirol, pp. 109—110.

Deo Dharma—IV

Deo Dharma was founded in Lahore by a Brahmin, Pandit Satya Nand Agnihotri, on February 16, 1887. He was formerly a master in the Government School at Lahore. While there, he had come under the influence of Brahmo Samaj, and had become its missionary in 1879. Subsequently, however, he developed independent ideas and founded a separate Movement, the Deo Dharma.

Founder
Satya Nand
Founded,
1887

In the main principles, the Movement founded by him was progressive. Like the other progressive bodies of the time, the Deo Dharma rejected all caste distinctions. The most cardinal point in their beliefs was that they revered all other religions; but they themselves rejected any idea of intercession, redemption and pilgrimages. They supported all civilised movements of the time, such as those for female education and female medical aid etc. They were however the fiercest opponents of the Arya Samaj, which according to them, was constituted of diehard religious fanatics.

Main Prin-
ciples

The Headquarters of the Movement were at Lahore and by the early years of the 20th century, they were said to have as many as 12 missionaries and 190 members and sympathisers within or out side of the province.

Its Progress

Sanatan Dharm Sabha—V

This Movement was also started in Lahore, in 1889. The Movement according to the Punjab Census Report of 1901, was "the most prominent of the formal associations; orthodox Hindus established for the conservation of the ancient Hindu religion by the Vedas, puranas and other Shastras."

Started 1889

The objects of the movement, as noted in the memorandum of its constitution were to promote and preserve old orthodox Hinduism, to establish a college for imparting modern education together with religious instructions and to establish a library, where to keep all works treating of Sanatan Dharma.

The objects

Return to
old faith

They adopted the term Sanatan Dharma, because they advocated a return to old faith of Hinduism, but the term was widely used, and was frequently returned by the members as their sect. Even the Hindus of lower caste did this.

The
progress

By the first decade of the 20th century, the Sabha had its High School and an advanced Sanskrit Pathshala in Lahore. For a time, its management was lax, but soon it improved. Preachers were sent out to collect library of Sanskrit works and manuscripts and soon it became an important body.

Some Minor Associations—VI

Sat Sabha
started 1880

Sat Sabha was established at Lahore in 1866, to impart elementary truths of Western knowledge to the people of the Punjab, through their own languages. The organisers also aimed at religious and social reforms among Hindus. But the movement does not seem to have been very much successful. Towards the beginning of the 20th century, the Association was reported to be loosing its importance.

Hindu
Sabha
started 1880

Hindu Sabha was established at Amritsar in 1830. Its object was to revive the study of Sanskrit literature. The Sabha also aimed at social reforms among Hindus and at the educational development in the community. By the first decade of the 20th century, the Sabha had a prosperous school of its own.

CHAPTER—XXII

Socio-Cultural Movements in the Punjab (contd.)

B—Movements Among the Sikhs

Tendencies among the Sikhs resembled closely those among the Hindus, and they also therefore organised societies instead of sects.

Gulab Dasis—I

Gulab Dasis or Saints, says Bingley, were chiefly interesting in the near approach of their doctrines to those of the Epicureans¹. The society was founded by one, Pritam Das, an Udasi faqir, his principle disciple being a Jat Sikh, named Gulab Das. Gulab Das was a trooper in the service of Maharaja Sher Singh and joined the society of Pritam Dass on the collapse of the Sikh monarchy. Gulab Das compiled a sacred book called Updes Bilas, and he taught that man was of same substance as the Deity, with whom he would eventually be absorbed.

Fouuder
Pritam Das

Gulab Das

The Gulab Dasis dispensed with pilgrimages. They preached against useless religious ceremonies, and against veneration of saints. According to the Punjab Census Report of 1881, pleasure alone was the aim of the Gulab Dasis, and renouncing all higher objects, they sought only for the gratification of the senses, for costly dress and tobacco, wine and women, the lust of the eyes and pride of life. They were scrupulously neat in their attire and were engaged in all wordly pursuits, some of them being men of considerable wealth.²"

Their aims

1. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, (1899) p. 68.
2. Census, 1881, p. 138.

Their character

The Gulab Dasis were said to have a considerable abhorrence of lying and there was certainly no hypocrisy in their tenets. In appearance they varied. They saw no harm "in incert," and had disgusted all respectable communities by their licence¹. All the castes were admitted in the society but the members from different castes did not intermarry nor did they eat with each other².

Progress

The society does not seem to have progressed much. The early 20th century literature shows that the society was confined to Lahore and Jullundur.

The Nirankari Movement—II

The circumstances

At the time the Nirankari Movement was started, the Sikhs had fallen into many evil habits. The daily prayers had been forgotten, the old evil practices of Sati etc. redeveloped. The worship of Brahmins, expensive marriage and death ceremonies, and worship of idols, gods and goddesses; all these practices were getting once again the bane of the Sikh society. Several persons had set themselves up as Gurus, in the line of Guru Nanak and Gobind Singh, and the tragedy is that the illiterate masses, not only respected them, they worshipped them, and at the cost of these ignorant people, these so called Gurus, practising all the moral and immoral means, were developing a sort of principalities of their own. The most important of such Guru 'gadis' was that of Baba Vir Singh Naura-nghadia; the others being those of Baba Sahib Singh Bedi of Una, Sodhi Sahib of Anandpur, Sodhi Sahib Guru Har Sahai of Ferozepur, and the Sodhis of Kartarpur.

Christian Missionaries

And besides, after the Punjab had been annexed, a flood of Christian Missionaries, with the free blessings of the British Government, established

1. Bingley, p. 68.

2. Census, 1881, p. 138.

their centres in the Punjab, at different places, such as Taran Taran, Amritsar, Lahore and Peshawar. Not few Sikhs were converted, and even Maharaja Dalip Singh could not escape the effects of their propaganda. The Nirankari movement in the Punjab was a reaction against all this.

The Nirankari movement was founded by Baba Diyal, who was born at Peshawar, on May 17, 1783. His father, Bhai Ram Sahai and his mother, Ladki,¹ had been very regular in the daily Sikh religious practices, attending the Gurdwara and reading the holy book *Granth Sahib*. At the age of six, the Baba started getting his education at the hands of his own mother, in Gurmukhi, and afterwards he was sent in a maktab (School) to learn Persian. But his education remained just nominal. By the age of 17, he mastered not only the Sikh History, but also the Sikh sacred book, and started preaching among the Sikhs. His father and mother had died while he was young. Just this time, Baba Balik Singh² of Mahidpur, a holy man of considerable fame, visited Peshawar, and being impressed with the boy, he appointed Baba Dayal as his successor. In 1808, Baba Diyal left Peshawar and settled at Rawalpindi opening a grocer's shop in that town. Soon he was married with Mul Devi, the daughter of Bhai Charan Das of Bhera, and had three sons, Darbara Singh, Bhag Mal and Ratan Chand. The marriage, however, did not effect his career as a preacher, in which he became yet more serious. In 1823, he was granted a big jagir, which was used by the Baba for *Langar*, and which continued with the Nirankaris till the partition of the Punjab.

Founder
Baba Diyal

Rawalpindi

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1. See Khazan Singh, Giani, 'Nirmal Nirankari Ithas', 1935, p. 19.
 2. This Baba Balik Singh was different from the one who was leader of the Namdhari Movement.

Jealousies

The rising influence of the Baba was not liked by some persons, who occupied the Gurdwara Pishorian in Rawalpindi, where the Baba used to preach, and closed its doors to him. The Baba, at that, purchased some land out-side the town, at a short distance, towards south-east, and there, on December 3, 1851, he established Nirankari Darbar.

Nirankari
Darbar

There-from, he organised his activities established about forty Subahs at different Nirankari centres in the province, and sent preachers and musicians towards different sides, to preach his message.¹ The Baba died on January 30, 1855, at the ripe age of about

Died at 73

73 years, and when he died, his message had spread not only whole over the province, but outside in places such as Delhi and Agra as well.²

Darbara
Singh

After the death of Baba Diyal, his eldest son Baba Darbara Singh succeeded to the *Gadi*. After his accession, on March 12, 1855, Baba Darbara Singh is said to have held a grand congregation of his followers, where in, after the method of Guru Gobind Singh, he demanded two heads, one of a young girl and the other of a young boy. One, Nihal Singh offered his son Bhola Singh and Wahe-guru Singh offered his daughter Nihal Kaur, both of whom were married forth-with according to the Sikh rites, in the simplest manner. This was an invitation and an inducement to his followers to simplify the marriage procedure, so that it could be performed without entailing ruin upon either of the parties.

Simple
marriages

Baba Darbara Singh, thus continued his reforming activities among the Sikhs, till he died on February 13, 1870, at the age of 56.

1. See Rawalpindi District Gazetteer, 1883-84.

2. See Surindar Singh Baba, 'Nirankari Gurmat Prarambha, pp. 17-40; Khazan Singh, Giani, pp. 140-146.

Died 1870

After Darbara Singh's death, his younger brother, Baba Ratan Singh acceded to the *Gadi*. He was a man of humble dispositions and active habits. He continued the activities for social reforms amongst the Sikhs on the lines laid down by his elder brother and father. He died on January 3, 1909, and was succeeded by his son Baba Gurdita Singh, who guided his community on the same lines till his death in 1947, when Baba Hara Singh took up the torch in his hands.

Ratan Singh

Gurdita Singh

Main Principles.

The preachings of the Nirankari leaders seem to have been directed against religious ceremonies rather than against social and caste institutions. The Nirankaris worshipped God as spirit only and were against the adoration of idols. They preached against offerings to Brahmins or to the dead bodies. They preached against meat-eating and abhorred wine and other intoxicants. The Nirankaris must live a pure, simple and truthful life.

Religious

The sacred book of the Nirankaris was Adi Granth of Guru Arjan, from which they drew all their religious inspiration. They preached effectively in favour of widow-marriage, and many such marriages did take place under their auspices. They favoured marriages in simple manners, without any sort of pomp and show. Their birth ceremonies were simple and so were their death ceremonies. Instead of mourning on a death, they are said to have rejoiced on such occasions.¹

Social

The total population of the Nirankaris in the Punjab, in 1891, according to the Punjab Census Report of that year, was 50,724, which included 38,907 Kesadhari Sikhs and 11,817 Sehjdhari Sikhs. According to the Nirankaris their population increased later, but Captain Bingley

Their Progress

1. Bingley, 'The Sikhs', pp. 68–69; Census 1881, p. 138.

wrote in 1899, that they numbered only 38,000¹. Just before the partition, their population is said to have been between 70 and 80 thousands.

The Kuka Movement—III

Exactly a month before the first round of Mutiny was fired in Meerut, Guru Ram Singh founded, on April 12, 1857, a socio-political sect called 'Namdhari' in the Punjab. These Namdharis, while reciting Sikh Mantras or repeating the Name, often developed emotions, screamed and shouted, turbans in their hands and hair streaming in the air, hence called 'Kukas' or the shouters.

Founded
1857

Balak Singh
Originator

Died 1861

Ram Singh
born 1815

Balak
Singh's
influence
1838

The originator of this movement was one Balak Singh who was born at the village Sarvala, in District Attock, in 1799. Father of Balak Singh was Dial Singh, an Arora. Given to meditations from his early childhood, Balak Singh began to preach against social evils among the Sikhs at an early age. In 1838, Ram Singh, who was a soldier in Prince Nau Nihal Singh's army, came under his influence, and it was this man who later succeeded him and started the real movement. Balak Singh was only a silent preacher against social evils, but the chaos after Ranjit Singh's death and annexation of the Punjab by British, seems to have aroused in him a spirit to fight for political freedom, and at his inspiration, his disciple and successor, organised an active body of Namdharis. Balak Singh died in 1861 and was succeeded by Ram Singh.

Born in 1815, at the village Bheni Arayian, in District Ludhiana, Ram Singh was son of a poor carpenter, Jusa Singh. He learnt how to read and write Gurmukhi script, married in 1822, and enlisted himself in Prince Nau Nihal Singh's army at the age of 22. He came under Balak Singh's influence in 1838, and got himself initiated into

1, Bingley, pp. 68—69. But this seems to be erroneous, he might probably have considered only Kesadharis Nirankaris and not Sehjharis.

his faith; but continued in the army, till he left that service in 1845. In 1847 he started preaching against some bad habits among the Sikhs. He condemned the Sodhis and Bedis, who belonging to the lines of the Sikh Gurus, got themselves worshipped. He also condemned the influence of Hindu Brahmans and Muslim Pirs among the Sikhs and insisted upon the Sikhs receiving baptism as prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru.

In 1857, on the Baisakhi day, Ram Singh founded his movement, the Namdhari, in his own village, Bheni, where four Sikhs received baptism at his hands to start with. He fixed 22 preaching centres in different parts of the province, and in each one of them he appointed a Deputy called Suba, to carry on the preaching business. Besides, the Subas were also appointed in Gwalior, Hyderabad Deccan, Benaras, Lucknow, Nepal and Kabul. The institution of Subas was completed by 1864, and they went about preaching Ram Singh's message from place to place.

Baisakhi
1857

22 subas

In the beginning, the districts of Sialkot, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana formed chief centres of Namdhari activities, but later they spread to Ferozepur, Lahore and Gujranwala as well. Not only Sikhs joined this movement in great numbers, Hindus were also attracted towards it and by 1871, as it was revealed by Giani Ratan Singh in the court of Mr. Cowan, the Kukas numbered ten lakhs, of whom only one third were Kesadharis, the rest being all Sehjdharis.

They spread

Numbered
ten lakhs

Ram Singh never told his followers to beg about and move about unemployed as mendicants. The Kukas were to be found in all sorts of profession. They were businessmen, traders and merchants, and employed in Government and private services. They were found especially in Police and Army, where it was difficult to ascertain their number, because they joined these services with a purpose and never revealed their Kuka affiliations.

In all pro-
fessions

Pomp and
splendour

A Guru

As the time passed, pomp and splendour of Ram Singh grew. When he went on tours, his entourage consisted of a number of his Subas and splendid horsemen, all in beautiful white dress. His followers began to call him a Guru, as a successor in the line of Guru Nanak, and although in his letters addressed from Rangoon in exile, he openly condemned the practice, in the initial stages, he does not seem to have done so strictly, and therefore his importance among the Kukas, comparable to that of the ten Sikh Guru's developed. Just this time, one of his admirers seems to have produced a *Pothi*, proposed to have been written in the time of Guru Gobind Singh or earlier, in which it was written that one Ram Singh would appear, who would become a spiritual leader of the Sikhs and establish his rule in the country. In the early stages, Ram Singh himself seems to have developed some sort of belief in what was written in this *pothi*. The Kukas, rather, would replace Guru Gobind Singh with Bhai Balak Singh and Ram Singh, as it was generally held among them :

ਸਨਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਸਰੇ ਅਰ ਬਾਸੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਛੈਣੀ

He condem-
ned it

Born Guru Hazro, He resides at Bheni. But later, during his exile at Rangoon, he openly condemned this in his letters written to his followers in the Punjab. In one of the letters, he thus wrote :

"There is no need of my becoming a Guru, nor am I a Guru, I live only under orders. The world has attached meaningless claims on me."¹

Died 1885

Ram Singh died in 1885, in his exile in Burma.

1. "...ਕੋਈ ਮੈਟ੍ਰੀ ਤੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਣਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਨਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਾਂ, ਮੈਂ ਤੋਂ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਬੰਦਾ ਗਾਂ। ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਹਾਨ ਨੇ ਬੇਅਰਥ ਦਾਵਾ ਬੰਨਿਆ ਹੈ....."

The Articles of Belief.

Giving an account of the Kuka Articles of Belief, thus wrote Mr. Kinchant : "Gobind Singh's Grantha (Adi-Granth) is the only true one, written by inspiration and is the only sacred writing extant. Gobind Singh is the only Guru. Any person, irrespective of caste or religion, can be admitted a convert. Sodhis, Bedis, Mahants, Brahmins and such like are imposters, as none are Gurus except Gobind Singh. *Devidwaras*, *Shivdwaras* and *Mandirs* are a means of extortion, to be held in contempt and never visited. Idols and idol-worship are insulting to God, and will not be forgiven. Converts are allowed to read Gobind Singh's Grantha and no other book.¹"

Again, a brief account of the Kuka sect, given in Papers relating to Kukas, printed in 1863, reads.

Kuka
Papers

"The leading feature of the doctrines Ram Singh preaches are :

"He abolishes all distinctions of caste among Sikhs; advocates indiscriminate marriage of all classes; enjoins the marriages of widows; enjoins abstinence from liquor and drugs; but advocates much too free intercourse between the sexes; men and women rave together at his meetings, and thousands of women and young girls have joined the sect; he exhorts his disciples to be cleanly and truth telling. One of his maxims says : it is well that every man carries his staff, and they all do. The Granth is their only accepted volume. The brotherhood may be known by the tie of their pagris, *Sidha Pag*, by a watch-word, and by a necklace of knots made in a white woolen cord to represent beads, and which are worn by all the community." They had no respect for tombs and temples

1. Kuka Papers, 1863.

and were also iconoclasts.¹

Religiously, the Kukas were somewhere between Hindus and Sikhs. They were teetotallers, lived a simple life and wore only hand-made and pure Swadeshi clothes. Although condemned by Ram Singh, unlike the Sikhs, they believed in the divinity of the tenth Guru having descended upon Guru Balak Singh, then Ram Singh, Hari Singh and Pratap Singh.² On March 20, 1867, when Ram Singh visited Gurdwara Kesgarh, in Anandpur, and requested the priests to pray for him, they refused. On enquiry they told him that it could not be done, because he differed in his beliefs from the Sikhs, on the following points.

Gurdwara
Kesgarh

Points of
difference

1. He considered himself to be an incarnation of Deity.
2. At the time of initiating a person into his sect, he whispered mantra in his ear which was against the Sikh custom.
3. The initiated Kukas said, 'Born Guru Hazro. He resides at Bheni,' whereas the Sikhs believed that 'Born Guru Patna, He resides at Anandpur.'

1. Author's 'Social & Economic History of Punjab', (Ready). Original Home 1872, judicial, Aug., 273—274, pp. 2444—2449.
2. The Namdhari Ardas runs like this : ੴ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਬਤਹੋ ॥ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਤਰਉਤੀ ਜੀ ਸਹਾਇ ਪਾਤਸਾਹੀ ੧੨.

ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮ ਭਗੋਤੀ ਸਿਮਰ ਕੈ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਈ ਪਿਆਇ । ਫਿਰ ਅੰਗਦ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਰਾਮ ਦਾਸੈ ਹੋਈ ਸਹਾਇ । ਅਰਜਨ ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਕੁੰ ਸਿਮਰੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਇ । ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿ ਕਿਸ਼ਨ ਪਿਆਈਐ ਜਿਸ ਭਿੱਠੇ ਸਭ ਦੁਖ ਜਾਇ । ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦੂ ਸਿਮਰੀਐ ਘਰਿ ਨੇ ਨਿਧ ਆਏ ਧਾਇ ॥ ਸਭ ਥਾਈ ਹੋਈ ਸਹਾਇ । ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਸਭ ਥਾਈ ਹੋਇ ਸਹਾਇ । ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਚਾਲਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਸਿਮਰੀਐ ਜਿਸ ਮਾਰਗ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਤਾਇ । ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀਨਦੁਨੀ ਦੇ ਵਾਲੀ ਅੰਤ੍ਰਜਾਮੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਜੀ ਸਿਮਰੀਐ ਜਿਨ ਜਮ ਤੇ ਲੀਆ ਛੜਾਇ ॥ ਜੇਤ ਦਾ ਜਾਮਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਸਿਮਰੀਐ ਜਿਨ ਟੁਟੀ ਲਈ ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥

4. Against the Sikh customs, the Kukas removed their turbans from their heads in Gurdwaras, and spread their hair.

5. Against the Sikh customs, the Kukas sometimes got so much exhilarated and beyond self-control, that they started behaving like Muslim friars. Therefore the Kukas could not become Sikhs of the Guru.

The Kukas, however, were strict in wearing the five Sikh Ks, and in other Sikh essentials.

In their social beliefs, the Kukas were against child-marriage. They condemned infanticide and dowry system. The Namdharies in fact were religiously denied the right to spend more than Rs. 13 on a marriage. This practice obtains among them even in the present times, and in a recent Kuka conference at Delhi, many couples were married at Rs. 1-4-0 each.

Social Beliefs

The Kukas gave strictly equal status to women and believed in inter-caste marriage between caste Hindus and untouchables. The first such inter-caste marriage was performed among the Kukas on January 4, 1863.

The women

Writing in an article published in 1935, thus commented Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the present President of India : "Guru Ram Singh considered political freedom a part of religion. The organisation of the Namdharies became very strong. The principles of boycott and non-co-operation, which Mahatma Gandhi introduced so vigorously in our freedom movement were expounded by Guru Ram Singh for the Namdharies."

Political activities

The Guru's Non co-operation movement was based on the following five principles.

Non co-operation

1. Boycott of Government services.

2. Boycott of educational institutions run by British Government.

3. Boycott of law established by them.¹

4. Boycott of foreign clothings.

5. Disobedience of Government orders, which one's conscience abhorred.

Stead fast

And the Namdharies were so steadfast in these principles that even after the independence, their Guru Maharaja Pratap Singh and his son sacrificed all the modern necessities of life provided by the British Government.

Postal system

The Namdharies had their own postal system in operation in all the parts of Punjab, which worked efficiently under time schedule, and which was abandoned only after the independence.

Subas

To keep his disciples under direct control, Bhai Ram Singh had appointed Suba's and Naib-Subas, majority of whom were in districts Amritsar, Sialkot, Jullundur, Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Ambala, Karnal, Maler Kotla State, Nabha, Patiala and Sangrur.

Army and Police

The Kukas also enlisted themselves in great numbers in the State police and in the army, and got thereby, a military training to be used when required. When in such services, the Kukas did not reveal their identity. A special Kuka regiment was raised by the Maharaja of Kashmir, which later at the British intercession, was disbanded.

Embassies

To make his political programme a success, Bhai Ram Singh spread his spheres of activity in Nepal, Bhutan, Kashmir and several other States, as already discussed. Contacts were made with these rulers through Namdhari embassies. Bhai Ram Singh is also said to have been in contact with Rani of Jhansi and other leaders of the 1857 Mutiny; and also exchanged letters with Russia through the Governor of Russian Turkistan. The Bhai seems to have developed a belief that Russians were bound to march on India; with whose help, the British would be expelled from the country.

Qutab Khan, a British spy in Russian Turkistan thus supplied an information to the Punjab administrators that, a person named Guru Charan Singh, inhabitant of Chak Ram Dass in the Sialkot district, arrived at a particular place in Russian Turkistan on May 1, 1879, with a Hindi letter, purporting to be from Ram Singh, the Kuka leader and signed by several others. This letter, as stated by the informer, began with "Salams to the Russian Emperor, the Governor-General and the other Russian officers and went on to say that Ram Singh was the spiritual leader of 315,000 Kukas, all brave soldiers; that the tyrannical British Government had imprisoned him in Rangoon, but that his younger brother at Ludhiana kept him fully informed with what was going on that the British were afraid of losing the Punjab to the Kukas....." which, however, was bound to happen.

In the month of April, 1881, Sir Robert Egerton, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, was pressing the government of India for the issue of a warrant under the provision of Regulation III of 1818, "for the detention of Guru Charan Singh during the pleasure of His Excellency the Governor-General-in-Council."

Guru Charan Singh was already under arrest and detention at Lahore but the Punjab Government did not know any other way of keeping him under effectual restraint without trial, unless it was under Regulation III of 1818. In their opinion, it was dangerous to leave Guru Charan Singh at large because he was acting as the medium of communication between the Russian administrators in Central Asia and the disaffected Kukas. With liberty to move freely he would lose no opportunity of recounting the honours conferred on him by the Russians and of enlarging on the benefits to be reaped by the Kukas in the event of the Russians obtaining possession of the Punjab. The Government of India ultimately agreed with this proposal.

Guru Charan
Singh

His deten-
tion

Kuka
conduct

In 1863, the conduct of the Kukas on the whole, was reported to be orderly¹. The Inspector-General of Police, Punjab, reported in 1867, that their number was on the increase, but that there was no danger to be apprehended from the spread of the sect.² In 1868, it was reported that Kukaism was on the decline and that the belief in Ram Singh's supernatural powers had been shaken by experiences of the converts.³

Murders

For many years, the Kukas did nothing worse than defile or destroy shrines and idols, and murder butchers and others whom they suspected of slaughtering kine. But the Kuka outbreak of Tera, near Mukatsar, in February 1869, and some other available facts, according to the Deputy Commissioner of Ambala district proved beyond doubt that Kukaism aimed at the restoration of Sikh rule, and by necessity, the subversion of the British power.⁴

At Khote

In 1871, the Kukas met in conference at the village Khote in Ferozepur in which Ram Singh was present, but unfortunately, here they were divided into two parties and despite Ram Singh's admonitions, began to quarrel among themselves. Some Kukas got out of Ram Singh's control and attacked and murdered many butchers and others suspected of kine slaughter. On June 14, 1871, slaughters of the butchers took place in Amritsar, and on July 16, 1871 at Raikot. Some Kukas were arrested and hanged, and many were punished with fines and imprisonment.

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1. Original Home 1872, judicial, August, 273—274, pp 2444—2449.
 2. Author's 'Social & Economic History of Pb. (1849—1901)' (Ready)
 3. Original, Home 1872, judicial, Aug., 273—274, pp. 2464—69.
 4. Ibid, p. 2419.

In 1872, however, there was a more serious outbreak. On January 11 and 12, the Kukas met at the village Bheni, where Ram Singh was present. After the conference, the Kukas dispersed, but some of them went out of Ram Singh's control and decided to attack Malerkotla and occupy it. Although Ram Singh seems to have informed the British authorities of it, before hand, yet the Kukas succeeded in creating troubles. Mr. L. Cowan, the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana and Mr. Forsyth, the Commissioner of the Ambala Division, took too serious a view of it and under their orders, 49 of the Kuka ring-leaders were blown away from cannon mouths.¹

Malerkotla

Blown away

Concerning Ram Singh, thus did Mr. Forsyth address the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Punjab:

Concerning
Ram Singh

1. These two persons took unduly serious view of the Kuka activities. In this connection, letter No. 857, dated April 30, 1872, from Secy. to Govt. of India, Home Dept. to Officiating Secy. to Govt. Pb, may be quoted:—

22.His Excellency is under painful necessity of affirming that the course followed by Mr. Cowan was illegal, that it was not palliated by any public necessity, and that it was characterised by incidents which gave it a complexion of barbarity. That course was commenced in opposition to the spirit of instructions received from superior authority, and, in the absence of sanction... It was prosecuted to completion in contravention of positive orders.

23 Under all these circumstances, His Excellency in Council is compelled to direct that Mr. Cowan be removed from the service. He does so with deep regret, as Mr. Cowan's previous character and conduct have been unexceptionable, and as he acted with promptitude in concerting measures for the repression of the movement.

30. His Excellency in Council considers that Mr. Forsyth's conduct will be adequately dealt with by his removal from the Commissionership of Ambala to a position in another province in which he will not have to superintend the judicial proceedings of any native State, and by an expression of the opinion of the Government of India that he ought not in future to be placed in a position in which he would be called upon to exercise similar control and superintendence.

Deportation proposed

"I have the honour to inform you that I have considered it absolutely necessary for the preservation of peace in this district, if not for the peace of the whole province, to deport Ram Singh, leader of the Kuka sect at once from the Punjab, and to send him to Allahabad for safety until the pleasure of the Government regarding his final disposal be known.

His crime

"2. The complicity of Ram Singh in the outrages committed by his followers at Maloudh and in the State of Maler Kotla has not yet been thoroughly enquired into, and it is a fact that he reported to the police the intention of Lehna Singh and Hira Singh, the chief actors in the present case, to commit outrages. But by his own admission his followers make use of his name and take advantage of his presence among their fellows to commit murders and create disturbances.

He admits

"3 He admits, what I am now writing down his words that some time (he says about a month or six weeks) before the Amritsar murder, two men Jhanda Singh and Mehar Singh, asked leave to kill the butchers; others joined in the request, but he strenuously forbade them; nevertheless they perpetrated the crime. He admits that, though he had strong suspicion that these men were the culprits, he did not give any information to the Government. Some time afterwards, he says that Dal Singh, Mangal Singh, Diwan Sihgh and two others, came and asked his leave to commit the Raikot murder, but he forbade them and they did the deed without his knowledge. But he admits that he never gave any clue to the Government officers not even when he was summoned to Bassian by Mr. Macnabb and interrogated. It is therefore quite evident that he kept the Government in the dark as to the proceedings of his followers. His excuse is that he was ignorant of our laws, and that as he had forbidden his followers to be guilty of murder,

there was no obligation resting on him to report the matter to Government, not even when he found that murders proposed by his followers had been committed.

"4. To allow such a man at liberty is in the highest degree dangerous, even supposing his statement to be true, and then to be no more guilty of complicity than is to be inferred from his silence when information from him, as in the Amritsar case, would have led to a prompt apprehension of the real culprits.

"5. I trust that the action I am now about to take may receive the sanction of the Government, and that warrant may be issued under Regulation III of 1818 for the detention in custody of Ram Singh and those of his Subas who, during the next day or two; shall be apprehended and forwarded to the Magistrate of Allahabad."¹

His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala also wrote to Mr. Griffin, the officiating Secretary, who agreed with him that in the light of these proofs along with some other facts, it was certain that Ram Singh's real motive and ambition was to reign and acquire dominions, upon a religious pretext.

dangerous

Regulation
II .Maharaja
Patiala's
view

Ram Singh, thus, was deported to Burma, where he died in 1885.

It is said that the Kuka attack upon religious places, as they were iconoclasts, injured feelings of their neighbours, "while pure morality which they at first preached had been superseded by the most unbridled license under the name of religious enthusiasm, men and women dancing naked together and indulging in orgies which had alienated the sympathies of the more decent portion of the community".

Deported
Loss of
character

1. Punjab Census Report, 1881, pp. 138.

Their
number

As revealed by Giani Ratan Singh, the Kukas numbered in 1871 ten lakhs. According to the Punjab Census of 1891, however, they numbered only 10,541, throughout the province, the number having increased to 13,788 in the British territory alone, by 1901.¹

The
successors

After Ram Singh, Guru Hari Singh succeeded, who was not allowed to move out of his house in the village Bheni, for 21 years. He died in 1906, and was succeeded by Pratap Singh. During the World War in 1914, the British Government tried to appease the Kukas by land grants and through some other means, but failed and had to use tyrant's rod. In 1920, the Kukas started their paper 'Satyug, and in 1922, their daily, 'Kuka' was started. When the non-co-operation movement was started by Gandhi Ji, the Kukas joined hands freely. Gandhi ji himself, is said to have learnt many points from the Kukas, and modified his campaign to revolutionise the social and political structure of India.

Their
activities

The Singh Sabha Movement—IV

Origin and
character

This movement was organised after the Namdhari movement had declined, and was third of the important movements among the Sikhs. But unlike the Nirankari and the Namdhari movements, the Singh Sabha did not believe in continuation of any 'Guru gadi.' The Movement was not interested in politics, its emphasis was on religious social and literary activities among the Sikhs.

Factors.
Christian
Missionaries

There were certain factors which hastened its start. After the annexation of the Punjab, a flood of Christian Missionaries had moved into the province. The Sikhs and the Afghans were the two communities from which some trouble could be apprehended and therefore, the best

1. Punjab Census Report, 1901, pp. 136—137

means to tame them was to bring them under the folds of Christianity. Amritsar being the centre of Sikhs, and Peshawar that of Pathans, thus wrote Sir Edwardes to Sir John Lawrence: "There are two obligatory points the Peshawar Valley and Manjha. The rest are mere dependencies. Holding these two points you will hold the whole Punjab!." The British intentions are clear.

The first great missionary movement in the Punjab proper was the establishment of the American Presbyterian Mission at Ludhiana in 1834, The Ludhiana Mission as it thus came to be called later on, occupied a number of stations in the Central Punjab south of the Ravi. The Church Missionary Society began operations in the Punjab in 1851 and developed stations comprising a group round Amritsar and Lahore, and a long line of frontier stations strictly from Simla to Karachi in Sind. It established a college in Lahore which prepared Indians for holy order. The Society for the propagation of the Gospel began work in Delhi in 1852. In 1877 it was reinforced by the St. Stephen's College at Delhi. Other Missionaries were the methodist Episcopal the Church of Scotland, the Moravian the American United Presbyterian, the Zanana Bible and Medical Missions, and the Salvation Army, besides the missionary work conducted by the various Roman Catholic orders².

The British Government themselves took an undue and unreasonable interest in these missionary activities. Sir John Lawrence, the chief Commissioner of the Punjab used to contribute Rs 500 a year towards these activities, and so did Maharaja Dalip Singh, who himself had been converted into Christianity. The official interest of the Government is manifest from Queen Victoria's own letter

Their Progress

Government interested

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1. Robert Clark, 'The Punjab and Sindh Missions, 1885, p. 38.
 2. The Author's Social and Economic History of Punjab,, to be published shortly; Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab, i, pp. 52—53.

Queen's
letter

to Lord Dalousie, Dated November 24, 1854, expressing the hope that the development of the railway communication in the country would facilitate considerably the spread of Christianity in these lands¹.

The
converts

The total Christian population in '901 reached the figure of 71,854 souls, of whom 38,513 were Indian Christians whose number had risen from 3,912 in 1881 and were now nearly twice as numerous as they were in 1891. Between 1881 and 1891 the Indian Christians added 15,838 and between 1891 and 1901 they had added 18,763 to their numbers.

Sikh
students

The effect of continuous Christian propaganda in the Punjab was not viewed with any satisfaction by the Sikhs. In 1873, four Sikh students of the Amritsar Mission School offered themselves for conversion into Christianity. Although they were prevailed upon by the Sikhs to desist from such action, it charged the atmosphere in the Province. Besides, Pandit Sharda Ram Philori, supposed to be an agent of the British, began to criticise the Sikh faith just this time. The Sikhs themselves were divided into two parties, one of which regarded Sikhism as a new faith while the other considered it only a branch of the Hindu religion. The Udasi sub-sect and others of the similar mould supported the latter, but the former were in a great majority.

Atmosphere

Some movements, such as the Niraknari, Anjuman-i-Punjab and Brahmo Samaj etc. had already done the spade work, and created an encouraging atmosphere for such initiatives. The matter was actually precipitated when a Hindu missionary erected a pulpit in the vicinity of the Golden Temple and openly vilified the teachings

Vilification

1. Letters of Queen Victoria, 1837—1861, Vol. III, pp. 68—69.
2. Author's 'Social and Economic History of Punjab'.

and achievements of the Sikh Gurus. This stung the Sikhs of Amritsar to activity.¹

It was as a reaction against these developments that some reasoning minds among the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar in 1873, and organised the Singh Sabha Movement. Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia was elected President of the organisation and Giani Gian Singh as its Secretary. The main principles of the movement being to remove Sikh short-comings and to revive the basic Sikh philosophy.

Organised
1873

The movement thus organised, grew soon to popularity. Many Sikhs, and even Udasis among them, joined it. But it was not a long time before the original enthusiasm slackened, and due to some bitter differences among its leaders, the movement declined. It was only Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Professor, who revived the movement later.

Decline

Prof. Bhai Gurmukh Singh, and the Singh Sabha Lahore

A man of daring spirit, humble habits and selfless disposition, Professor Bhai Gurmukh Singh was born in 1849 in a poor family, at Kapurthala. His father, Bhai Basawa Singh, a Chandar Jat, was an ordinary cook in the kitchen of Raja Nihal Singh of Kapurthala. After the death of Raja Nihal Singh, Basawa Singh transferred his services to Prince Bikram Singh, who took keen interest in the education of Gurmukh Singh.

Born 1849

In 1876, the Bhai placed a clear programme before the Sikhs, if they wanted to keep the torch of the Sikh faith alight. The programme was :

Programme

1. Khushwant Singh, p. 98.

1. To produce national literature in Punjabi.
2. To impart religious education to the Sikhs.
3. To save the Sikhs falling from their faith.
4. All such activities to be carried on in co-operation with the British Government.¹

And for this, he proposed to revive the Singh Sabha of Amritsar. He met Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia and another important person, Bhai Karam Singh, in this connection. It was a result of their joint efforts that, the Punjab University Oriental College, which had been opened in 1876, introduced also teaching of the Punjabi language, in 1877, Prof. Singh himself being appointed a lecturer for the subject. Besides, Prof. Singh also wrote some important books in the language one of them being *Bharat da Itihas*.

The third important achievement of the Professor was that with the help of Sandhanwalia and Prince Bikram Singh, the two founder members of the Amritsar Singh Sabha, he revived the Sabha again, the meetings of which began to be held regularly. This Sabha remained in the control of the Sandhanwalia Sardar.

Lahore being an important place, if the Professor desired to have an easier success in the field, it was essential that a Sabha should be organised there. Consequently, the Professor gathered around him some selected Sikhs of the city, and founded a separate Sabha there in 1879, under his own leadership. Besides others, some government officials also became members of this Sabha. Sir Robert Egerton, the Governor of the Punjab being requested, agreed to be its patron, and some other English officers also started taking interest in the body. The Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne himself, in a speech at Patiala,

Punjabi
introduced

A Book

Sabha
revived

Singh Sabha
Lahore

Founded
1879.

1. Gurmukh Singh to Raja of Kapurthala, 1894,

on October 23, 1890, said: "With this movement the Government of India is in hearty sympathy. We appreciate the many admirable qualities of the Sikh nation, and it is a pleasure to us to know that, while in days gone by we recognised in them a gallant and formidable foe, we are to-day able to give them a foremost place amongst the true and loyal subjects of Her Majesty the Queen Empress."

Government's sympathy

In 1880, Professor Singh started the first purely Punjabi weekly 'Gurmukhi Akhbar' from Lahore, and shortly after commenced preaching tours towards different directions in the Punjab, as a result of which, Sabhas were established in differrnt important Sikh centres and cities of the Province.

Activities

The basic principles of the Lahore Sabha, to start with, were same as those of the Amritsar Sabha. But as its activities developed, missionary tours were undertaken and the programme widened, some new aims for guidance were laid down, which were:

New aims

1. To define the principles of Sikh religion and to preach them among the people.
2. To bring in the market those books in which Sikh religion was explained and praised.
3. To collect the doubtful Sikh literature, such as '*Pothis*' and to correct it by additions and subtractions.
4. To develop Punjabi language and to publish papers and magazines in it.
5. The opponents of the Sikh faith, or those who were converted from it, unless they came back into the Sikh faith and accepted due punishment for their hostile activities, could not become its members.

5. Europeans and others could become its members if they were favourably disposed towards its programmes
6. The Sabha was not to say or preach any thing against any other faith.
7. Nothing was to be said against the Government. The movement would be faithful to them¹.

After some time, the Sabha also started planning *Pujari Sudhar* in the Sikh Gurdwaras.

In the beginning, the Singh Sabha co-operated with Arya Samaj but as the time passed, differences developed, and they were separated. An important achievement of the Sabha was that a movement for the establishment of Sikh educational institutions was started, which resulted in the establishment of a school in Lahore in which Punjabi began to be taught in Gurmukhi script².

The Khalsa Dewan

After some time the question arose whether the Singh Sabha of Lahore or that of Amritsar was greater. This resulted in a common meeting on April 11, 1880, which set up a General Sabha to guide the smaller two. In this Sabha some members from each party were taken, who would meet after every six months and supervise and check the activities of the both. But the first meeting of the General Sabha proved to be its last meeting, and the programme chalked out for it was never carried into practice.

Arya
Samaj

Educational
institutions

General
Sabha 1880

failed

New effort

In 1883 an effort was made to revive the General Sabha and it was now named Khalsa Dewan³. But this effort also failed in establishing a permanent body. The

1. Report Shri Guru Singh Sabha, Lahore, 1880, pp. 54–55.

2. Ibid., p. 65.

3. Dewan is Big, a Sabha a small body.

two Sabhas of Lahore and Amritsar, differed fundamentally from each other, the points of difference being :

1. The Singh Sabha of Lahore under the guidance of Professor Singh was a progressive body, while that of Amritsar was conservative.

2. In the Khalsa Dewan the majority of the members came from the Lahore Sabha, who by their slow moving habits made the progress difficult.

3. Some persons among the leaders of the Amritsar Sabha such as Baba Khem Singh Bedi, being from the line of the Sikh Gurus, called themselves Gurus and preferred self-worship.

4. The members from Amritsar were weak in national spirit.

5. The Amritsar leaders insulted Bhai Gurmukh Singh, calling him the son of a cook¹, or the one having low origin.²

When the two Sabhas could not come together, and lay down a common programme for the Khalsa Dewan, the Amritsar members did it themselves. In the programme laid down by the Amritsar members, all the importance was given to the leaders who wanted to get themselves worshipped, and to the *Pujaris* who desired to strengthen their hold on the Gurdwaras. For some time, Bhai Gurmukh Singh kept quiet, and attended the meetings of this body. But he could not enjoy the society of these Rip Van Winkles for long, and ultimately established a separate Khalsa Dewan at Lahore, with its own declared principles.

Differences

Amritsar
Sabha did it.

In the meanwhile, the lovers of education among the Sikhs occasionally met together, and the idea for a separate Khalsa College, went on maturing. Activities for

Education
and religion

1. Langri da putr.

2. Singh Sabha Papers.

religious propagation from both the sides, went apace, and the both sides began to bring out their separate periodicals.

Gurmukh
Singh
defamed

Yet as the time passed, bitterness between the two parties increased. As Bhai Gurmukh Singh developed his activities, his opponents became bitter, and to decry and defame him, the Amritsar leaders called a special meeting of some important Sikhs of the Punjab, in which they were able to pass a resolution, which later on, was brought before the Sikh *Sangat* in the form of a '*Hukamnama of Akal Takhat*'. In this resolution, Bhai Gurmukh Singh was blamed of having violated some Sikh essentials. He was declared to be an irresponsible man, not to be responded to for what he said regarding the Sikh religion. There being differences among the Lahore members themselves, Gurmukh Singh suffered a serious set back for a time, and actually retired from activites. Soon, however, as the realities came to the surface, the differences among the Lahore members were composed and Bhai Gurmukh Singh was restored to the Lahore leadership.

Restored

Khalsa
College

Despite these differences, however, the movement for the Khalsa College went apace. Efforts continued to be made, especially by the Lahore members, whose appeals ultimately bore fruit. Many Sikh chiefs and capitalists responded with high financial contributions.

Founded
1892

The foundation stone of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, was laid on March 5, 1892, by Sir James Lyall. And by 1899, the institution became a Degree College.

Decline of Singh Sabhas. And Institution of Chief Khalsa Dewan.

Differences

After the establishment of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, prestige of the Lahore Sabha increased, and with that did increase the jealousy of its opponents. Unfortunately, after sometime, differences arose once again, among

the members of the Lahore Dewan themselves. The Khalsa Dewan Lahore had a hold on the College, and some of its members began to criticise Bhai Gurmukh Singh for his pro-Jat attitude in the College management. Bhai Gurmukh Singh, however, could not remain a target of this attack by his own colleagues for long. He died and left this mortal world on November 24, 1898, and with him died all the energetic activities which had distinguished the Lahore Dewan from the Khalsa Dewan of Amritsar.

Death 1898

The Amritsar Dewan being already on the decline, it is said that both these bodies died, and their place was now taken by a new organisation the Chief Khalsa Dewan. It seems however to be incorrect. The movement merely changed its name, and a new spirit was infused into it as it would be clear from the following account.

A new body

Chief Khalsa Dewan

The efforts to establish a general Sikh body had already been made, which had resulted in the establishment of the first Khalsa Dewan. But the movement failed. By this time, however a leader had been born, who energized the activities once again. This new leader was Sardar Sunder Singh Majitha, who came in the field in 1892-93. He started by becoming a member of the Khalsa Dewan Amritsar. In 1895, he became a member of the College Council, and developing his hold in the Khalsa Dewan, Amritsar, he developed his influence with the Khalsa Dewan Lahore, as well.

New leader

On November 11, 1901, he called a meeting of important Sikhs at Amritsar, in which a resolution was unanimously adopted that Sikhs needed some all Sikh body to serve the General Sikh cause. Lahore was asked to join hands, which it did. On October 30, 1902 the Chief Khalsa Dewan was established, which had a similar programme as that of the progressive Sikhs in the two old bodies. A special

Meeting 1901

Founded
1902

mention may be made of some of their objects, which were :

Objects

1. To strengthen and develop the Khalsa College into a premier institution to impart higher education.
2. To organise an educational movement among the Sikhs, and to establish more schools and colleges.
3. To improve Punjabi literature.

Education Committee

A Sikh Education Committee was established under the Dewan in 1907, which later held many conferences and opened Khalsa Schools at several places in the Punjab.

More Dewans

Soon, however, differences arose among the members of the Chief Khalsa Dewan as well. In 1906, Baba Teja Singh, developing a difference with Sardar Sunder Singh Majitha, established a separate 'Panch Khalsa Dewan,' for the Sikhs of Malwa. This was soon copied, and Dewans were established at Taran Taran, Nabha and several other places in the Punjab. Clearly, by this time the terms Dewan and Sabha seem to have become synonymous. The original Sabhas as a matter of fact, did not die, they merely changed names and under different colours, the movement went apace, declining and rising again, till considerable number of achievements went to its credit.

The Achievements

Among the achievements, a few may be mentioned. Besides the establishment of Khalsa College, a premier Sikh institution, at Amritsar, which was its first and foremost achievement, the formation of Sikh Education Committee was a step of far reaching consequences. From 1908 onwards, annual Education conferences were held in different parts of the Province, which resulted in the establishment of several new Sikh institutions in the Punjab, notable among them being a Khalsa College at Gujranwala, and Kanya Maha Vidyalaya, a girls school, at Ferozepur.

Education

Sikh Missionaries went out to preach their religion and for proselytism into their faith Attar Singh, Sahib Singh Bedi, Khem Singh Bedi and Sangat Singh carried campaigns in the country, and in Northern Punjab and Sind many urban Hindus joined this faith.

Missionaries

Vir Singh founded 'Khalsa Tract Society' and a weekly, 'Khalsa Samachar.' Kahn Singh of Nabha wrote Encyclopedia of Sikh religion and Sikh culture. Dit Singh and other important poets and prose-writers further enriched the Punjabi literature. And even in the realm of politics, the name of the Chief Khalsa Dewan, however insignificant its achievements, was mentioned with respect, for its integrity and honesty, in matters, pecuniary.

Literature

Politics

The account of the Singh Sabha movement may be concluded with a few words regarding the factors which led to its decline. The decline of the movement began by 1914, and by 1918 it had lost much of its vitality. The Sabhas, unfortunately, were given more to resolutions, conferences and pamphleteering, than to practical work in the field. The hereditary priests in the Sikh shrines, had been becoming a bane of the Sikh society. More reasoning minds among the Sikhs viewed them with no sympathy, and they could have been organised by the Sabha in a determined movement to eradicate the evil. But although the more progressive members of the Sabha felt its necessity, nothing was done in the connection in practice. In certain respects, the movement only ill-responded to the aspirations of the people. The vested interests seem to have failed its organisers to see what was required of them in the changing circumstances of the country. In its anxiousness to remain loyal to the Government in power, it antagonised the people by its failure to sympathise with Ghadr revolutionary group in the Punjab. It sided with the Government in the shooting incidence of April 1921.

The Decline

Less practical

Priests

Loyal

Selfish

More radical

Nor could its members remain above personal aspirations and selfish motives. Continuation of *Guru Gadi* in their line and development of personal fame and prestige remained one of the weaknesses with some of its leaders. A more radical element such as the Akalis, was in the making, and this movement could never recover from the discredit which it had earned during this period¹.

The Sodhi-Bans²—V

The Khalsa Sodhi-bans was a new reforming movement among the Sikhs, started towards the close of the 19th century. It aimed at a return to the pure religion of Guru Nanak. The number of its followers in the beginning of the 20th century was 2,000, who were scattered over the Province, but chiefly found in the North-West, especially in Sialkot, Shahpur and Rawalpindi³.

The Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar—VI

This society was established in 1890 with a view to conveying the simple truths of Sikhism in the Punjabi language. Social reform was another aim of the society⁴.

C—Movements Among the Muslims

Ditte-Shahi—I

Arain of Suk
Kalan

Ditte-Shahi, though not of much importance, was the only new sect of some importance, which developed among the Muslims during this period. Ditte Shah, the founder of the sect, was an Arain of the village Suk Kalan, about three miles east of the town of Gujrat. At the age of 40 he became disciple of a faqir named Mian Mohammad Panch of Sheikhupura in Gujrat and having given up worldly pursuits began to lead a retired life.

1. Khushwant Singh, p. 101

2. All the following matter has been drawn from Author's 'Social and Economic History of Punjab' (Ready)

3. Punjab Census R., 1901, pp. 136—137.

4. Pb. Admn. Rep., 1902—02, p. 184.

His creed was simple one. He exhorted people to do good actions and disregarded outward ceremonials. He wore red clothes and was said to have given up the religious duties enjoined by Islam. He died about 1881 and was succeeded by Mian Muhammad Yar.

His creed

There was however no learned man among the Ditte-Shahis and the sect did not possess any books of literature. They discarded the ordinary religious duties observed by Muslims and considered Ditte Shah to be the real Rasul of God and felt so much reverence for him that sometimes they looked to be believing him to be not different from God.¹

Short
comings

Anjuman-i-Islamiya-II

Of the literary societies among the Mohammedans, Anjuman-i-Islamiya, Lahore, was founded in 1869 with the object of interpreting the measures of Government concerning the Muslim Community, and to lay before the Government the views of Mohammedans.² They fought for the recognition of the claims of the Mohammedan Community to a proper share of the State patronage,³ The society had its own paper which according to the view of the Government in 1881, was being conducted with ability.⁴

Anjuman-i-
Islamiya,
Lahore 1869

Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore-III.

This society was organised in 1866. Its chief aim was to give the Muslim youths a good grounding in the principles of their religion along with secular instructions, and to support orphan and destitute children. To this end by 1901, it had established a flourishing school with college classes and an orphanage. The movement, though it wished to effectually combine religious with

Anjumm-i-
Himayat i-
Islam 1866

1. Pb. Census Rep. 1901, p. 143.

2. Pb. Admn. Rep., 1901-02, p. 183; Authors 'Soc. Ec. Hist. Pb.'

3. Home, 1889, Education, Feb., 47-52.

4. Home, Public, B, March, 11-12.

intellectual education, did not indicate any narrow spirit of bigotry or reactionary feeling in regard to education.¹ The association also published text books for Islamiya Scool.

Anjuman-i-Khdim-i-um-i-Islamiya, Lahore—IV

This society was founded in 1888 for the encouragement of Arabic learning. **Anjuman-i-Islamiya, Amritsar** was established in 1874. Its object was to promote the cause of religious and secular education among Mohammedans and to look after their social and political well-being. The former society had a thriving "Maktab" of its own and the latter a high School in flourishing condition, by the end of the 19th century.

D—The General Literary Societies:—

Of the purely non-religious societies, the 'Delhi Literary Society,' was the oldest institution of its kind, and was founded in 1865. Its main objects were the advancement of learning and the encouragement of social and intellectual intercourse. At one time this association wielded considerable influence, but by 1901, it was reduced merely to a recreation club.

Delhi
Literary
Society
1865

Indian
Association,
Lahore

Punjab
Association

'The Indian Association, Lahore' was founded in 1883 with the purpose of advancing the cause of political advancement and social reform. The 'Punjab Association' of Lahore was a branch of the 'National Indian Association of London,' and was established in 1886. Its objects were: (a) the encouragement of friendly intercourse between Englishmen and the Indians. It had its organ 'Punjab Magazine,' a monthly journal, which however lost its former vitality by the first decade of the 20th century.

I. Thapar, K. B., 'Convocation Addresses,' p. 87.

'The Punjab Science Institute' was founded in 1886, mostly through the exertions of Professor J. C. 'Oman. Its main aim was to promote the cause of scientific learning and practical education in the Province. But in the later years of the century, this society too was only in a State of stagnation.¹

Punjab
Science
Institute

1. Pb. Admn. Rep., 1901-02, pp. 183-84.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Disturbances

A—Hindu And Sikh Conspiracies.

Started 1907

Deportations

Arya
Samaj's
connection
with politics

The fact

The most active movement in the Punjab to overthrow the British rule in India, was started in 1907, which resulted in the deportation of two Punjab leaders, Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. The investigations, according to Sir Michael O'Dwyer, showed "that among those implicated were many members of the Arya Samaj."

Alarmed by the deportation of Lajpat Rai, one of its prominent members, a deputation of the Samaj waited upon Sir Denzil Ibbetson, the Governor, in May, 1907, to convince him that the Samaj as a body was purely socio-religious, having no connection with politics. The Samaj also published a resolution to the effect. But the government does not seem to have been convinced of it, as according to O'Dwyer, while the Samaj did not include more than 5 per cent of the Hindu population of the Punjab, the enormous proportion of the Hindus convicted of political offences were its members. And according to a report published in Tribune, Sir Ibbetson himself said that while he was pleased to receive an assurance from the Samaj, nearly every District Officer had informed him that wherever there was an Arya Samaj it was the centre of "seditious talk." The fact seems to be that, whereas the Samaj as a body may not have been interested in politics, its centres offered convenient meeting grounds where people came in contact with those who individually or through some other

organisations, were interested in politics and were anxious to throw off the foreign yoke.

The deportation of 1907, did not kill the spirit of the valiant fighters, it rather sharpened their zeal for national independence, and when released, Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh became active once again in various ways. Lajpat Rai established his contacts with Bhai Parma Nand, a Professor in the Arya Samaj College at Lahore, and through him, by the distribution of books and other means of propaganda, efforts were made to arouse students against the British. Bhai Parma Nand was a daring adventurer whose activities stirred apprehensions in the British minds, who put him on security in 1910. He was sentenced to death in 1915 for his active participation in the Ghadr rebellion at Lahore. Later, however, the Viceroy commuted his sentence to that of transportation for life, and after some time, he was amnestied.

Efforts continued

Ajit Singh was no less the man of a high spirit. In 1909 he disappeared from India, and was later found travelling in Persia. Thence he moved to Paris, and shortly after reached Geneva, the centre of revolutionary activity. When the War broke out, he moved to Rio Janeiro, from where he established a close contact with the Ghadr Party in San Francisco.

Ajit Singh

Just about this time, yet another illustrious figure appeared on the scene. It was Har Dayal, a brilliant young man of scholastic habits who had got himself imbued with a determination of national independence when he was yet a small boy. He belonged to Delhi and was educated there in the St. Stephen's College, where he came into contact with Amir Chand. After his brilliant academic career in Delhi and Lahore, he got a State Scholarship in 1905 for studies in St. John's, Oxford, but threw up his scholarship in 1907, and devoted himself thenceforth actively to the revolutionary activities of

Har Dayal

Preached
boycott

his countrymen. He returned from England to Lahore in 1908 and joined Lajpat Rai with whom he stayed for some time, and then anticipated Gandhi Ji by about ten years, by preaching boycott and passive resistance among a party of young men who stayed with him and were trained for the part they had to play.

To Europe
again

Har Dayal left for Europe once again in 1908. From London he moved to Paris, where he stayed with Krishna Verma, who had fled thither from London, after the courageous assassination of Sir Curzon Wyllie by Dhingra, a Punjabi student. From Paris Har Dayal went to Geneva and here for some time, he edited *Bande Matram*, and returned to India in 1910.

Back

Back in his country, Har Dayal once again undertook the training of a party of youngmen, which included among others one, Chatterji, a Bengali, and another, Dina Nath, a Punjabi. Soon after, however, he left for America, handing over the charge of political training to a teacher in the Cambridge Mission School of Delhi, named Amir Chand, and to a Bengali clerk in the Forest Department, named Rash Bihari. These two persons later organised their activities on a wide scale. They drew their bombs and funds from Bengal and it was as a result of these activities that the murderous attack on the Viceroy was made in December, 1912; and the Lahore bomb murder took place in, 1913, in which a *Chaprassi* (messenger) was killed. Dina Nath, one of their pupils turned approver, a complete information was supplied to the authorities; Rash Bihari escaped, while Amir Chand, together with three others, was hanged. The Session Judge described Amir Chand as the "one who spent his life in furtive murderous schemes which he was too timid to carry out himself."

Wide scale

Punishments

In the meanwhile, arriving in the United States in 1911, Har Dayal settled himself in Berkeley, California, and kept the torch of the national movement alight amidst the Indian immigrants, chiefly Sikhs, who had settled along the Pacific Coast from Vancouver to San-Francisco since 1907, and who by this time numbered several thousands. In 1913, Har Dyal started his famous 'Ghadar' newspaper which inspired the immigrants to prepare for a fight against the British imperialism in India. In his work he was assisted by Barkatulla, Ram Chandra and Peshawari. Barkatulla belonged to Bhopal and had been a strong advocate of Pan-Islamism. In 1909 he joined Tokio University as a Professor and soon started a paper named the Islamic Fraternity. He had his contacts with Krishna Verma in Paris and in 1911 he visited Cairo, Constantinople and St. Petersburg. On his return from the trip his activities gathered more of a momentum and the tone of his paper became more violent and anti-British, for which it was suppressed by the Japanese Government in 1912, and he was relieved of his post in the University in 1914, whereafter he joined Har Dayal and threw his lot with the Ghadr movement in the U.S.A.

Har Dayal
in U.S.A.

'The Ghadr'

Barkatulla,
Ram Chand-
ra and
Peshawari

Barkatulla

Har Dyal seems to have been in a close confidence with Germany. As his activities in the U. S. A. developed, he also began to be considered as an undesirable alien in that country. His *Ghadar* was translated into various Indian vernaculars, and not only was it circulated freely amongst the Indian immigrants in the United State, its copies were also smuggled into India. Thus Har Dyal used United States as a base for his attack against the British Government in India and ultimately had to be arrested by that Government in March 1914 with a view to deportation. Being released on bail, he however forfeited the bail and escaped to Switzerland together with

Ghadar
circulation

Har Dayal
escaped

In Berlin

Their
activities

Raja
Mahendra
Pratap

Barkatulla, leaving Peshawari and Ram Chandra behind to carry on the *Ghadr*.

At the time of the outbreak of the First World War, Har Dayal and Barkatulla were in Berlin, carrying on their revolutionary activities against the British from that country. Here they were joined by certain Bengali gentlemen of the same mould, such as Chattopadhaya¹ and Chakravarti, a Madrasi named Pillai, and some other Indian heroes, who were attached to the Indian section of the German General Staff and were the leaders of an "Indian Revolutionary Society." According to the Lahore judgement in the third conspiracy case, "This society, which aimed at establishing a Republic in India, held constant meetings attended by Turks, Egyptians, German officials and, most noteworthy of all, German ex-professors and ex-missionaries, who in their time had received the hospitality of the British Government in India. Har Dyal and Chattopadhaya were in daily communication with the German Foreign Office. To carry out the revolution in India there was an Oriental Bureau for translating and disseminating inflammatory literature to the Indian prisoners of war in Germany. Inflammatory letters drafted by the German Government and addressed to the Indian Princes, were translated and printed, and meetings were held in which the common objects of Germany and India were dilated upon, these meetings being sometimes presided over by highly placed German officials."

Just this time Raja Mahendra Pratap joined Har Dyal. It was a welcome addition to the revolutionary group in Germany and their activities went apace. German authorities and the Kaiser treated the Raja with great distinctions and soon he, with Barkatulla and the German

1. Brother of Sarojni Naidu.

Mission, was sent to Kabul to establish an advanced base against the British Government in India. Thus by this time, Har Dyal had spread his activities to a good number of places and had established his branches in several countries. He was in touch with the branches at Calcutta, Delhi and Lahore through his Bengali and Punjabi associates, in the United States and Canada through Ghadr Agency, in the far East through Barkatulla and others and in Kabul through Barkatulla and Raja Mahendra Pratap.

Activities spread

These activities resulted in various troubles against the British. The Pan-Islamist movement was directly encouraged and assisted, thus resulting into several conspiracies such as the "Silk Letter." The rebellion in Bengal, for which the leaders, arms, and ammunition were imported through Batavia and Assam, was another result. The rising in Burma and the famous Ghadr movement of the Sikhs, they were also in a way, a result of the revolutionary activities carried on by Har Dyal and his associates.

The results

B—The Pan—Islamist Movement.

The Pan—Islamist movement, which was a purely Islamic movement, but which had a Hindu sympathy, was organised in the Northern India in the second decade of the twentieth century. The basis of the movement was religion, but in its effects it was political and anti-British. The source of inspiration for the movement was the basic sympathy of the Indian Mahomedans towards Turkey.

2nd decade
of 20th
century

Sympathy
with Turkey

Turkey had been the 'Sick-man of Europe' for a pretty long time. Different European communities under its control, had been asserting themselves and trying to get their independence. The big powers of Europe always tried to exploit the situation to their favour and draw

Sick-man of
Europe

as much benefit as possible. The net result of all this was a steady decline of the once mighty Turkish empire. Turkey being a Mahomedan country, it had a natural sympathy of the Indian Muslims.

Attitude of England

During the Turco-Italian and Balkan wars of 1911-13, Great Britain had manifested an attitude of complete neutrality, whereas the Indian Mahomedans should have liked the British to show an active sympathy towards Turkey. The speech of Mr. Asquith, the British Prime Minister which he delivered in the connection in November 1912, was rather interpreted to mean an active British hostility not only towards Turkey, but towards Islam itself.

World War

During the World War, Turkey had joined the enemies of Great Britain. The Pan-Islamist section among the Indian Muslims carried on its activities with Turkey, Arabia, Germany and Afghanistan. But after the Central Powers had been defeated, and a sort of harsh treatment was shown towards Turkey, this coupled with the propaganda of the Sultan Abdul Hamid and later of Enver Pasha, inbued some of the Muslims of India yet further with the Pan-Islamic aspirations. For a time, they also joined hands with the Hindu revolutionaries in a 'Hindu-Mahomedan Entente', against the British, which resulted in the Punjab and Bombay outbreaks of April, 1919, and in the more serious Moplah rebellion of 1921-22. The Entente, however, collapsed after spreading disorder and bloodshed over the country for some years.

The Entente

Only Urban

The rural Mahomedans of India being interested chiefly in their local politics and in their protection against exploitation by the more astute urban Hindus, the movement seems to have been confined basically to the urban Mahomedans. Among the most effective members of the movement was Zafar Ali Khan, the editor of *The Zamindar* published at Lahore. He in 1912 started subscriptions

The leaders

for the Turkish Crescent, and after having a good amount of money collected, he himself went to Constantinople to present it to the Grand Wazir. On his return, the tone of his paper having become more anti-British the security was forfeited in 1913, under the Press Act. Shortly after not only the security was again confiscated but his press also met the same fate. Mohamad Ali and his brother Shakutat, Ali were the other two active leaders.

Early in 1914, Turkis, Consul-General came to present a beautiful carpet to the Gadshahi Mosque at Lahore, which had been sent by the Sultan of Turkey as a mark of his gratitude towards the help the Indian Muslims were rendering. And shortly after followed two Turkish doctors of the Red Crescent society itself.

A gratitude

During the Christmas week, soon after Turkey had entered the War in 1914, a Mahomedan educational conference was held at Rawalpindi. It was attended by Abul Kalam Azad and Mohamad Ali, who after the conference was over, lectured to young and impressionable Muslim students at tea-parties in some Lahore Colleges and elsewhere. In February 1915, 15 students from Lahore and some students from Peshawar disappeared as a result of this and got into touch with the Indian revolutionary leaders, Mahendra Partap and Barkatulla, Joint Presidents of 'Provisional Indian Government' who with German help, had made Kabul their advanced base against the British in India.

Educational conference

Students disappeared

Some of these students from here, were sent on missions to Persia, Central Asia and Japan, three of whom, together with the famous Sikh missionary Dr. Mathra Singh, fell into the hands of the Russian allies of Britain on the Persian border. They were handed over to the British authorities who hanged them later. Two of the students thus hanged, were carrying letters to the Sultan of Turkey and the third together with Mathra Singh was on a mission to China and

On missions

Got Information

Japan. From some of these students the British got in August, 1916, the information regarding the "Silk-letter" plot which had originated in Kabul in 1915-16.

'Silk-letter'

The so called "Silk-letter" plot was designed to unite all the forces of Islam, the Turks, the Afghans, the Arabs, the Frontier tribes and Mohammedans of India, against the British. The plan was that the Frontier tribes of India would start with an attack and it was hoped that the revolutionary Hindus and the American returned Sikhs in India would at once join in. The conspiracy was organised with some skill in Central Asia, Hejaz, Mesopotamia, Central Asia and India, and when the start was made, much help was expected from all these quarters.

Discovered

Just this time, two of the students, who were sons of a Mohammedan soldier in the Punjab, sent a servant who had joined them in Kabul, back to India with some message to their father. When severely heckled, the servant admitted that he had brought a letter written in Persian on lengths of yellow silk and sewn up inside the lining of his coat. The letter dated July 9, 1916, was meant for Mahmud Hasan, a famous Muslim religious leader in Sind, and in it was described the progress of the movement in Kabul, the formation of the "Provisional Government" etc., and a plan for the organisation of an "Army of God" against the British.

Mahmud Hasan

Earlier in 1916, the "Provisional Government" had also despatched a mission to the Russian Governor-General in Turkistan and even to the Tzar of Russia urging upon him to break with England. The Tzar forwarded this information to the British authorities, but later, the Bolsheviks tried to make a use of this proposal and stab the British in their back.

Russia approached

This explains how serious and widely laid plans the movement had. Mahmud Hasan, to whom the "silk-letter" had been addressed, had already got into communication with Ghalib Pasha, the Turkish General in Hejaz from whom he obtained a declaration of Jehad against the British, the copies of which, known as 'Ghalibnama,' were freely distributed in India. The "Silk-letter" gave him the suggestion to carry his preparations a step further. The headquarters of the "Army of God" were to be at Medina and Mahmud Hasan was to be its Commander-in-Chief.

Activities of
Mahmud
Hasan

The plan

In the Punjab, however, these efforts did not go beyond internment of a dozen or so pro-Turkish adherents. Zafar Ali Khan's movements were restricted to his village till the end of the war. The Ali brothers were restricted to a place near Delhi. After his release, Zafar Ali Khan re-started his activities, and in 1920, was sentenced to five years imprisonment. The Ali brothers and Mr. Gandhi under the similar circumstances, were also sentenced to long term imprisonments. The movement, except at Kabul, where the Muslim leaders established contacts with revolutionary Hindus inspired from Berlin, and at some places in India, was entirely distinct from Hindu and Sikh movements in the Punjab. The imprisonment of the leaders led to the development of hostilities between Hindus and the Muslims once again.

Measures
taken

Hindu
Muslim
contact

The final blow to the movement was given as a result of the summary action of the new Turkish Republic in deposing the Sultan. This abolished the Khilafat and sent the Osman House to wander.

Final blow

C—The Agrarian Rising

The Agrarian rising took place suddenly towards the end of February, 1915, in the Muzaffargarh, Multan and Jhang districts of the South-West Punjab, when the Ghadr and the Pan-Islamist movements were just in

Rising in
February
1815

their thick. Although they had no connection what-so ever, with either the Ghadr or the Pan-Islamist movement, they were inspired and enthused with the same spirit that the Turks and Germans were advancing on India and the British rule would soon end.

Poor Mahomedans

The poor Mahomedan peasantry of these districts had been heavily in debt to the Hindu moneylenders. The prices were soaring, and when the epidemic of plague broke out, many Hindus left the villages to take refuge in the towns. Rumours spread that the British had left. In one case emissaries were actually sent to the district headquarters to see if the British flag was flying. Incidentally, it being Sunday, the flag had been hauled down and the officers were retiring into their huts. This strengthened their belief that the British had left.

Looting and disorder

Here was an opportunity for the peasants to pay off their old scores. They rose in a body and started an alarming campaign of looting and disorder. The Hindu shops were looted, their account-books in which the debts had been recorded, were destroyed and grain and money plundered. Between 22nd February and 20th March, about fifty gang-robberies were committed on the Hindus. Disorder spread all around; although there was not much loss of life, only five Hindus dying as a result of injuries, and about eight of these peasants being shot by the police or by others in self defence, the loss and destruction of property was great. Two of the leaders began to pose as the Crown Prince and the Kaiser, and they moved about freely to organise their followers, giving them high hopes and promises.

Prince and Kaiser

Prompt measures were taken to suppress the rising, which was hastened by passing just this time of the Defence of India Act, in March 1915. Special tribunals were immediately set up. Some four thousand of the disturbance-makers were arrested. About eight hundred of the

Measures taken

principal accused were tried by the Multan Tribunal in a few months time, and about five hundred were awarded exemplary punishments. Conciliation Committees were established under impartial and tactful Muslim officers to prevail upon the peasants to give fresh acknowledgement of their debts and to make good the loss of the Hindus, so that good feeling among them should be restored. Within a year or so, thus, perfect peace was established.

Perfect
peace.

D—The Ghadr Party

The Ghadr Party, unlike other movements, was organised outside India by Indian emigrants, and in it the Sikhs played an influential and a dominant part. Its origin and the part it played in the Punjab and elsewhere may here be briefly traced.

Outside
India

The Sikhs

Before the British annexed the Punjab, the Northern and the North-Western parts of this province had very sparsely been populated. Soon with the development of other and canals means of irrigation and cultivation, this part of the country was colonised and enterprising Sikhs from the Eastern Punjab, migrated to this part and became the wealthiest agricultural community of India. But it was not long before, the increase in family and some factors led to the fragmentation of holdings. The development of the evil of money lenders impoverished them further. The monsoons failed successively from 1905 to 1910 thus resulting in a famine. The imperialistic and economic exploitations of the British as Dr. Tarak Nath Das writes in his 'India in world Politics', added to their poverty and forced this enterprising community to seek other means of employment, and elsewhere outside their country.

Colonisation

Compelled to
leave
country

Migrated to
different
countries

In the beginning they migrated to Bengal but later also to Burma, Malaya States, Hong Kong, Singapur, China and other places where they worked as watchmen, policemen, electricians and taxi drivers etc. In 1888, some Sikh troops attended Queen Victoria's Jubilee in London and on their way back visited Canada, where they were impressed by its riches. Soon steamship companies were set up, which attracted the Punjabis, more particularly the Sikhs, who began to travel thither. In 1904, when the Sikhs in Hong Kong and Shanghai etc. learnt of the high remunerations and profits available in Canada and the United States of America, a large number of them also decided to go over to those countries. The number of Indians who had migrated to other countries was only 45 in 1904—05, but in 1906 and 1907 the figure increased to 2,124 and by 1907 to 2,623. By 1914, about 20 lakh Indians were working and residing outside India, Africa alone claiming 1,49,790, of them. Whole over the American Continent, the number of the Indian emigrants, by 1910 ran into five figures.

Americans
affected

The infiltration of the cheap Indian labour effected American labour agitation for higher wages in 1906 and 1907, with the result that the American workers began to despise these Indians. In 1906, the Canadian Legislature passed the Immigration Act to control the influx of Asiatics into that country. In 1907, the British Columbia Legislature dispossessed the Indians of their right to vote, and in 1908, the Municipal franchise was also taken away from them. Later, the already settled Indians also began to be got rid of through several new means. The Sikhs built a Gurdwara in 1906—7, at Vancouver in the British Columbia at the cost of £ 15,000. Many Sikhs set up their factories in the country. With the efforts of St. Teja Singh, the 'Guru Nanak Mining Company' was set up with a capital of 2½ lakh rupees. At the Eagle Harbour,

Measures
passed

Indian's
progress

250 acres of land was purchased at £25,000 for Guru Nanak Colony and another Gurdwara was built at Victoria. All this developed a jealousy in the European minds. The authorities tried to prevail upon these Indians to migrate to British Honduras where, as they propagated, better prospects would be available, but which was only a land covered with forests, and with a scarce supply of good drinking water. The Indians could not be trapped and the authorities were yet further antagonised.

Not trapped

The policy of racial discrimination in South Africa hardly needs much of explanation. Here many restrictions were placed upon Indians and many discriminatory taxes imposed on them. In 1893 Mahatma Gandhi had to start an agitation against this attitude of the South African Government which continued for twenty one years. In 1912 *Sriyut* Gokhle visited Africa to see the fight of the Indians.

South Africa

In Fiji the condition was no better. The Indians there were treated inhumanly, and they being not permitted to send for their families, they were losing their character. Mr. G. W. Burton in his *Fiji To-day*, gives a heart-rending story. Thus he writes, an Indian woman leaving her sick child in a coolie-line, went away to work in the field. In the mid-day recess when she came back in the line to see his ailing child, she was spied by a European sergeant who began to beat her blindly with a cane. The Indian woman with her ailing child was falling on the sergeant's feet, but he paid no heed and went on beating her.

Fiji

Inhuman treatment

In Australia and New Zealand, the conditions were no better, and the South Indian's were equally despised in Malaya.

Australia and New Zealand

Several efforts were made on the American continent to get the grievances of the Indians redressed. But they all failed. On March 14, 1913, a deputation consisting of

Redress grievances

Bhai Balwant Singh from Vancouver, and Sardar Nand Singh and Sardar Narayan Singh of Phillaur arrived in England. But there too they failed in winning the attention of the authorities. The deputation then came to India. Meetings were held at several places. In a meeting at Amritsar, Bhai Balwant Singh expressed the grievances very clearly. The deputation also met the Viceroy and the Governor of the Punjab at Simla. But nothing came out of all this and the deputation had to go back discontented.

The Ghadr Party.

Before, however, the deputation reached back in America, the Indian emigrants there had already realised, that the root-cause of all their troubles was the slavery of India itself, and till She got her independence, no Indian could expect an honourable treatment by the inhabitants of any country of the world. In March 1913, therefore, Kartar Singh Saraba, Karam Singh Chima, Lala Har Dyal, Jawala Singh, Sohan Singh Bhakna and Wasakha Singh etc. invited the settlers in a conference at Washington. About two hundred attended and founded the 'Hindi Association,' which later began to be called the Ghadr Party.

Head Quarters of the party were to be at San Francisco, and its aim was to liberate India by force. The first President of the party was Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, the chief Secretary Lala Har Dyal, the Treasurer Pandit Kanshi Ram of Ambala and the Organising Secretaries were Munshi Karim Bakhsh of Ludhiana and Munshi Ram of District Hoshiarpur. Among the members of its Executive Committee were, Baba Arur Singh of Chuhr Chak in Ferozepur, Wasakha Singh Dadehr of Amritsar, Bhai Karam Singh Chima of Jullundur, Kartar Singh Saraba of Ludhiana, Nidhan Singh Chuga of Ferozepur, Ishar Singh Margna of Amritsar, Pandit Jagat

But failed

Founded
March 1913

Headquar-
ters

The workers

Ram Hariana, District Hoshiarpur, Barkatulla and Munshi Karim Bakhsh. Majority of the settlers being Sikhs, in the party too they had a majority. Leaders and the members of the Executive Committee, all of them handed over their property and cash to the party.

In October, 1913, the second meeting of the Hindi Association decided to bring out a paper of their own, and on November 1, 1913, was thus the 'Ghadr' started, which was published simultaneously in Hindi, Gurmukhi, Urdu and Marathi. Har Dyal was appointed as its editor, who was soon arrested, but bailed out by his friends, he was helped by them to escape at the cost of bail bonds. Har Dyal thus disappeared from the scene in the United States.

Second meeting

The paper 'Ghadr'

Besides Har Dyal, other important persons who worked in the press for the 'Ghadr', were Kartar Singh Saraba, Harnam Singh Kotla Nodh Singh and Prithvi Singh Ambala. Manager of the press was Pandit Jagat Ram Hariana. The party bore only their expenses of food and clothings, no other remuneration was paid. The Paper began soon to reach Argentina, Fiji, India, Australia, Newzealand, Zanzibar, East Indies, Siam, Malaya, Burma, China and Japan. Branches of the Party were likewise established in different countries of the world.

Workers in the Press

Remuneration

The British anxieties in the Punjab increased when just after the War began, thousands of the Sikh emigrants, inspired under the Ghadr propaganda and determined to make their country independent, began to come in the Punjab, who if spread over the Province, were bound to make the British life extremely difficult. Government of India already had 'Foreigner's Ordinance', to prevent entry and control the movements in India of undesirable aliens. On this basis, the 'Ingress Ordinance' of September 5, 1914 was passed to deal with the Indian emigrants coming back to India. A serious problem arose for the British authorities in the Punjab, when on the 27th Sept.

British anxieties

The measures

1914, S. S. Kamagata Maru brought 400 Sikhs and 60 Muslims from the Far East, in Hoogly. A short separate account of the Kamagata Maru may not here be out of place.

The Kamagata Maru.

Baba Gurdit Singh,

Baba Gurdit Singh, an old Sikh gentleman of the village Sarhali, District Amritsar, who had established a good business in Malaya as a contractor, heard from the Sikhs in Canada that the Immigration Laws of the Canadian Government against the Indians had been suspended, and that the country offered very good prospects for a people of enterprising spirit. On January 3, 1914, the Baba reached Hong Kong, where he found a number of Indians willing very much to go to Canada. The Baba had a lucrative business in Malaya, but he felt very much for his countrymen, helots at home and unwelcome abroad except as "coolies". He gave up his business to do something to help his compatriots.

Ship
Chartered
March, 1914

On March 24, 1914, Baba Gurdit Singh chartered at Hong Kong, a ship named Kamagata Maru, from a small Japanese concern named *Shinei Kishen Go Shri Kaisha*, for six months, against a payment of £11,000 a month. Gurdit Singh changed the name of the ship to 'Guru Nanak Jehaz' and prepared for Canada. At first about 500 emigrants offered to travel in the steamer from Hon Kong, but as only a few days before the departure, the Baba was arrested by the Hong Kong police, and put in confinement without any charge being brought against him; and the anti-Indian element in the country made a prompt use of the opportunity to carry a campaign of slander against him, and frighten away the prospective passengers, their number ultimately fell to 165, with whom the steamer sailed on April 4, 1914. The local authorities had put a ban against the sailing of the steamer

Arrested

Felt for his
countrymen

to Vancouver, and it was only after the personal intervention of the officiating Governor, who happened to be known to the Baba, and after Baba's threats of a suit for damages, against the local authorities, that the ban was eventually lifted.

At Shanghai, where the steamer stayed for five days, 111 new passengers were added to it. From Shanghai proceeded to Moji where 86 more joined. At Yokohama 14 new passengers came in, and from here the steamer sailed with 376, all but 25 of them being Sikhs. The steamer touched the shores of Canada on May 21, but here Baba Gurdit Singh and his companions, were not destined to get a good reception.

A thorough checking of the steamer was made at the Victoria Quarantine Station and the steamer proceeded to Vancouver on May 23. Here the Canadian authorities refused to permit the emigrants to land, on a plea that they had failed to comply with the immigration laws of the country. Only a student and a doctor were permitted to land, they having established wrongful contacts with the authorities, against the Baba.

The objection of the authorities, however, seemed to be uncalled for, in connection with which, several arguments may be forwarded. Firstly, the Governor-General's Order-in-Council of 1910, had already been found *ultra-vires* by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. Secondly, at least three eminent British lawyers of Hong Kong had given their opinion, that there was nothing illegal in this steamer sailing from that place for Vancouver with the Indian emigrants. Thirdly, a committee of Indian residents of Vancouver with property worth two crores of ruppees, was prepared to guarantee that each emigrant was in possession of 200 Dollars as required. Fourthly, the emigrants had travelled on through tickets and by direct steamer to

Ban lifted

Number increased

Permission refused

Arguments against

No lawyers

Vancouver from their usual country of residence. And fifthly, actually a number of intending emigrants, such as preachers and teachers, were covered by the exceptions mentioned in the Orders-in Council. Baba Gurdit Singh, however, was not permitted to take the case to court, nor was he permitted a contact with some lawyer¹.

The prisoners

The passengers were kept as prisoners in the steamer for two months, and the authorities showed a complete callousness in refusing provisions and water-supply to the passengers, which included women and children. In the meanwhile, the Japanese Captain of the steamer was directed to weigh anchor at once and sail for Hon Kong, police being sent to enforce the order, who, however, were driven back by the passengers after a determined fight. A naval craft then appeared which threatened to attack. Good sense, however, soon prevailed, having sufficient water and provisions for the voyage were permitted, and the ship was forced to leave; Gurdit Singh, in the meanwhile, having been forced to transfer the charter of the ship to two Indians of Vancouver, after the ship's agent had been paid off his dues by the local Indian community. The new charterers, however, were not permitted to visit the ship, despite being responsible for all the financial liability.

A naval craft threateness

Returned

No Welcome

Disappointed and disgruntled, the steamer left for Hong Kong on July 23, 1914. A gross injustice had been done to them in the name of law and order and they had been denied the fundamental human rights. No wonder, therefore, they made some extravagant demands at Yokohama and Kobe, at the latter place they being conceded partly by the Consul. But they were summarily refused a permission to disembark at Hong Kong or some other

1. See Spokesman of August 18, 1954.

Chinese port, even though the captain of the ship had been directed by the Canadian authorities to sail back to Hong Kong. The boat was finally forced to leave for Calcutta, and it reached the mouth of the Hugli on September 26.

To Calcutta

At Kulpi, a few miles south of Calcutta, the next day, the passengers were met with a number of British and Indian officers of the Governments of the Punjab and Bengal, led by the District Magistrate of 24 Parganas, Mr. Donald. Their secret plan was to have the passengers landed at Budge Budge where a train was waiting to take them to Punjab. At Kulpi itself, the baggage of the passengers was thoroughly examined for arms and seditious literature, to a considerable annoyance and harassment of the passengers. And when on the 29th September, the boat was suddenly stopped at Budge Budge, 14 miles from Calcutta, and a party of the Indian and British officers, including Sir Frederic Holliday, the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, got on board, and ordered the passengers promptly to disembark at once to proceed to the waiting train for the Punjab, it was a bolt from the blue. The passengers suspected the Government's intentions, and refused to do so. Only some Muslim members among them, boarded the train, the rest, the Sikhs, with the copy of *Guru Granth* in front of them, proceeded on foot in a procession towards Calcutta. A body of the Punjab policemen followed behind¹.

At Kulpi

The search

At Budge Budge

On foot to Calcutta

The purpose

Baba Gurdit Singh's purpose in doing so was to deposit the holy *Granth* at the Gurdwara at Howrah and then meet the Bengal Governor. Another purpose was to consult a lawyer and settle some points of difference with the agent of the steamer. They also wanted to dispose of the surplus provisions and the furniture on board the Kamagata Maru. Many of the passengers wanted to

1. See O'Dwayer, "India As I knew it," pp. 190—209.

Suddenly stopped

settle in Calcutta itself and seek some employment than to go to the Punjab where 'the employment opportunities were scarce. Moreover they suspected the British intentions, and were not very much sure that they would be taken to the Punjab.

March back

The Punjab policemen did not interfere with them. But the procession had scarcely proceeded a distance of five miles, when it was suddenly stopped by a posse of British policemen and some officers who arrived in two motor cars. Baba Gurdit Singh and his associates were ordered to march back to Budge Budge. Hungry, thirsty and tired, kicked and hustled, they began trudging their way back. Reaching back at Budge Budge, the authorities refused to permit them to proceed to the awaiting train, as previously arranged. They wanted to lock them up for the night in the Kamagata Maru itself. They had neither been criminals nor prisoners, and resentful of the Government's attitude, a number of them sat down at the level crossing near the station and with the holy *Granth* and Baba Gurdit Singh in the centre, they started their evening prayers.

Attempt to lock up

Mr. Donald the District Magistrate of the 24 Parganas, ordered Gurdit Singh to come to him to arrange for his associates to go to the boat, which he refused to do before the prayers had been concluded, and wanted Mr. Donald to come to him instead. The police sergeant who had gone to contact the Baba, hit a Sikh in the congregation, his stick was snatched away. Then the British Superintendent of Police tried to drag the Baba out, to which the Sikhs resisted. Just this time a shot rang out, both parties believing that it had been fired by the other. Here was the signal for a general melee. Both the sides used their fire-arms, as the Sikhs also possessed some revolvers, which they had been able to keep with them despite the searches and despite the Baba's instructions to the contrary. Soon the British troops also arrived

A melee

from Calcutta, who fired 177 rounds of 303 bore from a close range.

In this melee, two British officers and two members of the Indian police lost their lives. Among the Sikhs 20 were officially reported to have been killed. The rest of the Kamagata Maru passengers scattered in various directions under the cover of darkness, but all the important roads and the railway track having been heavily guarded by the police, 211 of them were arrested. Baba Gurdit Singh, together with 28 others, escaped. Sixty two of them were sent under Police escort by rail to the Punjab, thus accounting for the 321 who had arrived at the Budge Budge.

To complete the story, Baba Gurdit Singh, as he wrote in his book 'the Voyage of Kamagata Maru.' after seven years of his wandering in disguise, surrendered to the police at Nankana Sahib, the birth place of Guru Nanak, under the advice of Mahatma Gandhi. The Baba was consigned to prison without a trial, and released after about a year. Shortly after, however, he was again put behind the bars for having delivered a seditious speech at the Durbar Sahib, Amritsar. He was released only in 1927 to find that all his property and belongings had been confiscated. He was completely ruined. Of the others who were arrested, all except 31 were released.

Activities of others

In the meanwhile, the activities of the Ghadarites in the United States went apace. Bopp, Brincken and Papen of the German Embassy cattered to their needs, and tore of the propaganda leaflets issued by the party urging the Indian troops to desert the English and join the Germans, were thrown behind the trenches in Mesopotamia and France. Two ships "Annie Larson" and "Maverick" full of guns, ammunition and other war materials for the use of Ghadr members were also fitted out in America and it was decided to smuggle the

The losses

Baba Gurdit Singh

Ruined

Propaganda

The two ships

An aeroplane

goods through some isolated port in India. The party also bought an aeroplane and trained its members as pilots.

The waves

Besides the Kamagata Maru; which consisted of persons inspired on the Ghadarite line, waves of revolutionists came from America, Canada, Panama, Hong-Kong, Singapur, Siam and Burma. Shiploads of them arrived at Calcutta, Madras and Colombo. On 28th October, the Japanese S. S. Taru Maru arrived at Calcutta with 173, mostly Sikhs from America, Japan, Manila Shanghai, consisting of main Ghadr leaders, allotted separate circles from their activities in the Punjab. The Punjab Government again despatched a strong force of Punjabi policemen under the British and Indian officers. All the passengers were interned in Central jails of Montgomery and Multan, and only 73 were released later after enquiries. Of these 73, supposed to be less dangerous, six were hanged for subsequent Ghadr outrages, 6 were transported for life, 6 were re-arrested and interned and two became informers. And this shows what violent programme those not released might have brought in the country.

Three categories

In the meanwhile, from October 1914, thousands of more Sikhs arrived from abroad, who after an enquiry, were divided into three categories. (1) Those who were considered to be a really dangerous character and who were interned in jails. 2) Those who were of less dangerous character and whose movements were restricted to their own villages and (3) Those who were discharged after a warning. Out of the 8,000 who entered the Province during the first two years of the war, some 400 were thus interned in jails, 2500 were restricted to their villages and the remaining were discharged.

Total 8,000

Slipped through

Scores of the Ghadarites however slipped through enquiries under the Ingress Ordinance and contacted the local revolutionary leaders. The persons such as Kartar Singh Sarabha, N. G. Pingle, Pandit Jagat Ram, Kanshi Ram, Prithvi Singh, Jagat Singh and many others successfully

infiltrated into the Military cantonments and persuaded the army units to revolt at the appropriate time. Their propaganda in the army was successful at Rawalpindi, Lahore, Ferozepore, Lucknow, Faizabad, Cawnpur, Allahabad and Jubbalpur. From October 1914 to September 1915 a series of explosions took place in the Central Punjab and attempts were made to seize the arsenal at Ferozepur. About this time it was that Rash Bihari moved into the Punjab and took general charge of the operations. He together with N. G. Pingle became the brain of the movement and Bhai Parma Nand, a Professor in the Arya Samaj College became a link between the disaffected section of the Hindu Intelligentsia and the Sikhs of the Ghadr Party.

Their activities

The brain

Outbreak of Feb. 19

Leaked

Timely measures

Every thing was working according to schedule. Rash Bihari and Pingle had their headquarters at Amritsar, and they were active in inciting the Indian troops, especially the Sikhs and Rajputs posted in the Northern India. They planned for a general uprising on February 21, 1915. But unfortunately their plans leaked out. They changed their head quarters to Lahore and decided for the uprising to be on 19th Febrary instead. The Government however, struck in time, 4 separate houses were raided in Lahore 13 persons were captured with all their papers plans and bombs etc., but Rash Bihari and Pingle escaped. At other places and cantonments, timely measures were taken. The "Annie Larson" and the "Maverick" failed to make contacts and were captured. A few weeks later, Pingle was also arrested in lines of the 12th cavalry at Meerut, with a collection of bombs, sufficient to blow up a regiment.

Legal proceedings were under-taken against the revolutionists, which culminated in the following famous cases: 3 Lahore Conspiracy cases; the Simla Conspiracy Case; Benares Conspiracy Case; the trial of Sergeant Harnam Singh at Faizabad; the Delhi Conspiracy Case; the trial

Legal Proceeding

of those arrested at Budge Budge; Ferozepur Conspiracy Case; Meerut, Barisal and Burma trial; the trials at Shanghai and Singapore.

Punish-
ments

Pingle and Parma Nand were sentenced to death. Pingle was hanged but Parma Nand's sentence was commuted to life transportation by the Viceroy and was later released. In brief, 175 accused in Ghadr conspiracy were brought before Special Tribunals. Of these 136 were convicted of offences nearly all punishable with death; 38 were sentenced to death, but in 18 cases the sentences were commuted to life transportation, and 20 were actually hanged. Fifty eight were transported for life and 58 were transported or imprisoned for shorter periods. In 115 cases forfeiture of property was ordered but in most of them it was remitted by the Local Government. Those who were interned, were later released on security and by the end of the war, only some half a dozen were still detained.

Other
measures

The Government took several other measures to crush the movement. The old policy of "divide and rule" was used. "With the assassination of Ram Chandra by a Sikh Ghadr agent for treachery and fund manipulation, the Hindus were encouraged and cajoled to leave the party. Similarly Dr. Syed Hussain and Shaukat Ali toured the State and started a Moslem League to wean away the Mohammedans. Some prominent Sikh members were also deceived in heading a dissident movement....

The charges

"Charges were also levelled that the party was operating as a smuggling ring through Maxico and was at the back of frequent Hindu murders." The U. S. Immigration Service and the British Consulate selected Indian informers on such activities, though many of them, as Nagina Ram, Sant Ram Pande, Nana Lal, Nathu Ram

The inform-
ers

and Sheru Ram in the United States, and Hopkinson, an ex-official of the Indian C. I. D. were got killed by the Party¹.

In the badly effected districts of the Punjab, committees of the local Sikh magnates were established, who helped the Deputy Commissioners in enquiring into the conduct of the emigrants and helped in controlling them. This naturally led to the assassination of many of the loyal magnates. In June 1915, for instance Achar Singh of Amritsar was murdered. In August, Kapur Singh of Amritsar met the same fate. In most of such cases, the murderers were captured and punished.

The Committees

Magnates murdered

The Communist Infiltration.

The attempt at a revolt in the Punjab having failed, the surviving Ghadr leaders returned to the United States to take a reappraisal of the situation. Under the pressure of the British Government, a case was filed here against 31 Indians on charges of violating the neutrality laws of that country. Many Indians along with several German agents were thus sentenced to varying imprisonments. In the San Quentin Prison, Bhai Santokh Singh, a prominent member of the inner committee of the party, came into contact with a Russian agent, who persuaded him to align his party with the International Communism. After his release, Santokh Singh convinced some of his colleagues, and was deputed along with Bhai Rattan Singh to go to Moscow where they entered into the alliance. Santokh Singh returned to India and started a communist weekly called "Kirti" and Rattan Singh returned to the United States to report about the alliance. The communists thus infiltrated into the party and the

Santokh Singh

To moscow

1. Spokesman Weekly of Feb. 9, 1955.

Joined
hands

leaders of the Ghadr Party in California frankly admitted that since Russia was working to free India it was only natural that these two movements should join hands. But this alliance "was known only to very few of the 'inner' members of the party."

The activi-
ties

The activities of the Party continued unabated, outside India. The Ghadr influence it was, which resulted in the Sikh and the Mahomedan troops refusing to fire on the Chinese at Shameen. The contacts were resumed with Germany and Japan during the Second World War

Acrimonious
debate

With the attainment of India's independence in 1947 the Ghadr Headquarters became a "scene of acrimonious debate." "Communist agents in persons and by letter, insisted that the relationship be continued, that India was far from free, that more and large sums be raised." However the Ghadr leaders in California were convinced that the aim for which the party was founded had been realized and that any further connection with the communist movement would land them into trouble with the American government. Besides, the members were tired and weary of the long struggle and voted to disband the party. Consequently in the early part of 1948 the building and the other assets of the party were turned over to the Indian government through Mr. Asaf Ali, the then Indian ambassador to the United States. The title was completely transferred to the Indian government in 1952 and it was announced that the building would be kept "either as a residence for government representatives or as a cultural centre."¹

Disbanded

Property &
assets

1. Spokesman Weekly, Feb. 9, 1955.

Thus ended the efforts of the simple and in most cases uneducated people entirely in the foreign surroundings, to contribute their little bit in the India's fight for independence. The Indian Ghadr party represents a chapter of violence in India's history, and hundreds of those who sacrificed their lives, homes and hearth, will remain ever a source of inspiration to generations for come.

A chapter of violence

CHAPTER XXIV

The Disturbances

E—The Out-breaks of 1919

India's
contribu-
tions in War

"In the hour of England's peril," thus wrote Pearay Mohan in his book 'An Account of the Punjab Disorders and the Working of Martial Law': "India rushed to her help with unfailing faith and loyal enthusiasm. The voice of controversy was hushed and the grievances which the people had against the Government, were laid aside." Or as Lord Hardinge said, India allowed herself to be "bled-white," and contributed freely in men and money. And in this, the Punjab did more than any other Province in India could do.

Punjab did
more
men and
money

About one million men were sent over-sea by India to fight battles of the British Empire, and upto 31st March 1919, £127·8m. had been incurred by India as her share towards the war expenses. Out of the former, the Punjab contributed as much as 60 prcent of the total, and in her contributions towards the war expenses, the Punjab competed successfully with the richer Provinces of India. Every thing was done to raise recruits in the Punjab, as sir M. O' Dwyer wrote :

"Checking the crazy ones,
Coaxing on aisy ones,

Lifting the lazy ones on—with Moral suasion!"

The recruits
in 1914

And when the Home Government asked for 21,000 combatant recruits in the last four months of the year 1914, 28,000 were raised, of whom 14,000 came from the Punjab, 3,000 from Nepal, 3,000 from the Frontier and trans-Frontier, and 8,000 from the rest of India.

In 1915, 93,000 combatants were enrolled, of whom 46,000 were from the Punjab, 14,000 from Nepal, 6,000 from the Pathan areas, and 28,000 from the rest of India. The first two and one third years of the war had brought to the colours about one hundred and twenty thousand Punjabis, "the cream of the fighting races¹", and their number increased as the war prolonged.

The "Legislative Council of the Punjab at its first meeting after war was declared, unanimously passed a resolution assuring the King Emperor of the devotion of the people of the Province and of their determination to serve His Majesty, in every form in which their help might be required, against the enemies of his Empire. The council was composed mainly of elected or nominated representatives of the Mohammedan, Hindu and Sikh communities and the resolution gave expression to the feeling of active loyalty that inspired the Province as a whole,²"

The sacrifices made by Amritsar in the war, were greater than those made by Lahore, so much so that in a speech at Kasur, Sir M. O' Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab solemnly declared that he would transfer the seat of Government from Lahore to Amritsar as a reward for the great war services of the latter and as a punishment to the former for its slackness in providing recruits.

From Loyalty to Rebellion.

But soon the picture changed. From loyalty the Punjab changed in 1919 to a scene of rebellion, and the city of Amritsar, of which Sir Dwyer was so proud, was the first to come in the field. Different theories were assigned to these out-breaks in the Punjab some of which being supported by Sir Dwyer himself.

Recruits
in 1915

and later

Legislative
CouncilAmritsar
sacrificesDifferent
theories

1. Sir M. O'Dwyer, 'Indi'a as I knew it,' pp. 216—222.
2. Ibid, p. 213.

Bolshevik
money

In the beginning it was believed that there was a huge conspiracy to subvert the British Government in India and to seduce the Indian army. The conspiracy was supposed to be financed by Bolshevik money, the ramifications of which had enveloped the whole country. The Punjab being the home of warriors, the conspiracy was more active here than in any other Province of the country. As, however, no evidence could be forwarded for the Bolshevik origin of the out-breaks, the theory failed.

Afghan
agency

Gandhi ji
blamed

Later on Afghan agency was substituted for the Bolshevik hand, but this theory too failed for want of any evidence. After this, Gandhi ji was blamed as being the chief conspirator, who wanted to overawe the Government by criminal means, and secure the repeal of the Rowlatt Act. An order of his exterrnent from the Punjab was passed by the Lieutenant of Governor Punjab, who was informed by a Hindu friend that "Gandhi had been heard to say that the British were now full of pride in their victory and considered themselves the masters of the world; but that he was master of a weapon which would soon bring them to their knees. That, of course, was his policy of Passive Resistance." The Hindu friend told him "to be on the look out for Gandhi's next move."¹ But this theory too failed.

The cons-
pirators

Then some local conspirators were blamed, who agitated locally, though not on provincial basis, but whose agitation developed a provincial character. The persons blamed were those such as Lala Harkishan Lal, Lala Duni Chand, Dr. Kitchlew, Dr. Satyapal, Mr. Labh Singh and Diwan Mangal Sen. But this view too failed as a result of the cross-examination of Lord Hunter's Enquiry Committee. And as a result of all this, the theory of conspiracy was given up as a whole, in disgust.

Given up

1. M. O'Dwyer, p. 363.

The Real Cause.

The most widely accepted view, as also supported by the Government of India's resolution of April 14, 1919, was that the agitation against the Rowlatt Act was directly responsible for these disturbances. The real cause however seems to be that the very atmosphere which existed at the time was explosive, and the agitation against the Rowlatt Act it was, which set it afire. And there were several factors which made the atmosphere explosive.

Atmosphere
explosive

Excessive recruitments had been made for the Indian army in the Punjab. The Punjab, as we have studied, supplied as much as 60 per cent of the total number of recruits raised whole over the country. And this means that out of twenty millions of its population as recorded in the Census of 1911, which was 1/15 of the total population of the country, the Punjab supplied during the war as many as 4,60,000 of her best men to fight the British wars. The Secretary of State himself admitted once that "many a family was left without its bread-winner or bread winners." The Punjabis had fought for no national cause. The chains of slavery seem rather to have been strengthened. And as Sir O'Dwyer himself admitted on April 7, 1919, this had "led to some serious riots and lawless out-breaks in the Multan Division and in Shahpur."

Excessive
recruitments

Dwyer
admitted

The methods adopted for recruitments in the Punjab under the ruthless regime of Sir O'Dwyer, too, were objectionable. To win a distinction in the supply of soldiers, Sir O'Dwyer assigned a quota to each district in the Punjab, and it was understood to be compulsory for the district authorities to supply the required number of recruits. Promotion of officers depended indeed on the number of recruits furnished. Police got false cases against the villages which failed in furnishing the assigned

Recruitment
methods

quotas. And the recruits in the Punjab became indeed an economic commodity to be bought and sold by those who were aspirant of honours and rewards, and who made thus an extensive transactions in the trade. These things were not loved by those who loved liberty and nationalism.

Not super-
humans

The Europeans in India were looked-upon as super-humans. But when the Indian soldiers in Europe saw them lame, blind and beggars as well, the spell was broken. Many Indian soldiers had been acclaimed and received as saviours in France by men and women alike. But when they came back to their country, they had to face the same old '*lot sahib*', as proud and arrogant as ever he was.

The loans

In the collection of war loans considerable severity had been used. The district revenue officials brought a good deal of pressure on the villagers to subscribe. Though the officers did not compel their subordinates to make their contributions, yet the very suggestions from them had to be complied with if the subordinates wanted to keep their favour. And then, the common man due to his illiteracy, did not understand the Government's need for loans. To him it was a sure sign of bankruptcy for the so called rich *sircar* to borrow from an ordinary man.

Bankrupt
Government

Rising
prices

Then there were economic causes. The prices had been rising. Wheat sold in 1912 at 12 seers and 4 chhataks for a rupee, while by 1919, the price rose to 6 seers and 9 chhataks. Maize sold 16 seers and 3 chhataks for a rupee in 1912, while by 1919 the price rose to 6 seers and 6 chhataks. As compared to this more than cent per cent rise in the prices, the rise in wages was only 50 percent.

No working
hands

And further, the excessive recruitment of soldiers drained the land of its working hands, and the produce per acre declined. The foreign imports were dearer. Influenza broke out just this time. Monsoons failed. And in fact,

the Railway employees were just on the verge of a strike when the disorder broke out. "Rebellions of the belly are the worst." as Bacon wrote.

The Punjab had hoped that British victory in the War would bring boons, which it did not. The common man had bled white, while honours and titles went only to the capitalists and high Government officials well-known for the recruitment of soldiers. Instead of getting freedom after the war, they got only the Rowlatt Act.

No boons

Thus the atmosphere was already explosive when the Act was passed. There had been a discontentment in the villages, and an inspiration in the towns too for independence. In such circumstances the Rowlatt Act was passed, which was a law only of barbarism and ruthlessness. Its provisions were so monstrous that no Indian with the slightest spirit of self-respect could bear to put up with it. It was a slur on India's loyalty, so definitely proved during the war, and about which the King Emperor himself had written in a message to the princes and the people of India, that India "had fulfilled my faith in her single-minded devotion to my person and Empire, and she has vindicated my confidence in her loyalty."

Rowlatt Act
monstrous

India had no desire to embarrass the British Government during the war; and therefore she had accepted the provisions of the Defence of India Act without demur. But it was more than a year before its expiry that the Rowlatt Act was hurled upon her. The Government of India had enjoyed some emergency powers during the war which they wanted to perpetuate under the Rowlatt Act, under the pretext that some mysterious anarchists existed in the country, who with the foreign help were determined to subvert the Government. Even the persons such as Sir O'Moore Creagh, formerly the Commander-in-Chief of India had denied that there existed any necessity for such a measure.

With
defence of
India Act.

Provisions of the Rowlatt Act.

A brief account may here be given of the different provisions of the Act, to prove its monstrousness. The Act was divided into five parts.

If anarchy prevailed

Part I. It applied to the state of things when the Governor-General-in-Council was satisfied that in a part of the country anarchy prevailed and it was expedient for public safety to provide for speedy trials of such offences.

The tribunals

Such trials were to be conducted in tribunals specially instituted for the purpose. There was a safeguard that if judges in a tribunal differed, no death sentence could be awarded to a person being tried. But since such differences can arise only in cases of doubtful guilt, the more illogical part of the Act was that the right to appeal above the tribunal was denied.

In Camera

The trial was to be held in camera. And this means that no opportunity was given to the public or to the relatives of a person under trial, to understand his case and arrange for his defence.

Retrospective

The height of calumny and maliciousness was that the Local Governments were authorised to give a retrospective effect to the provisions of this part of the Act.

Preventive

Part II. The provisions of this part were preventive. If the Governor-General-in-Council was satisfied that such conditions prevailed under which precautions for the maintenance of law and order were necessary, he declared the application of this Part.

Judicial officer

Under the provisions of this part, if a Local Government was satisfied that a particular person was a potential criminal, it could place the papers relating to him before a judicial officer qualified to sit in a High Court.

The person concerned, however, was not entitled to claim a hearing nor was the Local Government bound to follow the officer's opinion.

After receiving the opinion of the officer, the Local Government could in writing direct the person to give a bond not to commit the scheduled offences. He was to notify a change in his address, was to reside in an area specified by the Government, and report himself to the nearest police station at stated periods, for the duration of a year. After issuing these orders the Local Government was to forward the case for opinion to an investigating authority consisting of three persons, two of them being above the rank of District or Session Judges, and the third who was not in the service of the Crown.

Direct the person

The enquiry, again, was to be held in camera, in which the person concerned was not entitled to claim presence, there being no provision even for informing him.

Investigating authority

This report again, may not be accepted by the Local Government and it may pass the order upon the person for one year more. Thus the punishment could be given to a person even without a proper trial.

Not informed

Part III. When the conditions referred above were widespread to endanger public safety, this part was to be applied, under which any suspected person could be arrested directly and put into confinement. His house could be searched and then the enquiry under the Part II, was to follow.

May not accept

The Part IV was more drastic in its provisions and the Part V laid down that "no order under this Act shall be called in question in any court."

When widespread

The assurance that the Act was to be used only for public safety, proved to be false. And while the Government contended that the Act was limited in its application to anarchial and revolutionary crimes; it refused to

Not questioned

Wrong assurance

incorporate in the Act the definition of such a crime, with the result that the application of the provisions extendend to the extent of absurdity. It is a measure, thus wrote M. A. Jinnah, "admittedly abnoxious and decidedly coercive at time of peace, therby substituting the excutive authority for the judicial."

Jinnah's view

Protest meetings

The natural result of the measure was protest meetings and resolutions but while in other provinces this might have resulted in disturbances, not a single instance of violence occurred in Punjab. The climax was reached on 6th April when at least a million persons took part in protest meetings whole over the province, yet no violence was anywhere used.

Peaceful

Dwyer's attitude

But the ruthless regime of O' Dwyer tried to suppress the agitation with an iron hand. Dwyer had a particular hatred towards the educated classes, and before the Act was passed he tried gagging the newspapers of the Province, discouraged the independence criticism and isolated the Punjab from the rest of India. The Mahomedans had already been agitated on the fate of Turkey and the Khilaft. There was general atmosphere of discontentment and lack of confidence in the Government. And when the people agitated against this Act, he took it as a direct challenge to his ideas of a good Govt. As the agitation and demonstrations in peaceful manners grew, Dwyer also grew violent. Freedom of speech in public and the freedom of writing of the persons such as Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal was supreseeded. He issued orders prohibiting Gandhi Ji from entering into the Punjab on 4th April, but the order was shown to Gandhi Ji only when he reached Palwal, a small railway Station on the border of the Punjab. Gandhi Ji politely refused to obey the order, was arrested and taken to Bombay. This happened on 9th April, and when its news reached Lahore on the 10th, the people were stunned. A thorough hartal was organised

Kitchlew &
Satyapal

Gandhi ji

throughout the town in half an hour, and a mob collected to protest against this action of the Government. But they were fired upon and dispersed.

This was a signal for disturbances whole over the Punjab. On the same date as a mob was fired upon at Lahore, a mob rose in Amritsar and endeavoured to force its way into the Civil Station where the British officials and non-officials resided, and was held up by the small British picquets on the bridge over the railway which connected the City with the Civil Station. The havoc and destruction which this mob brought about is too well known to be repeated here. There is no doubt that several people in a fit of fury lost the balance of their mind. Government property worth millions of rupees was destroyed. Some Europeans were butchered and their property put to fire. Similar disturbances occurred at Kasur and other places. But the retaliation of the alien Government was yet more brutal.

"If your house is on fire and you call in the fire-engines," said Mr. Joseph, an official member of the Punjab Legislative Council in 1921, "and the fire-engines pump water into the house so fast and furious that they ruin all your furniture, all your carpets; it is no use afterwards to discuss how many buckets full of water might have been sufficient to extinguish the conflagration." But this was no good argument.

As the agitation continued, on 13th April, 1919, the people from all the parts of the Province collected in the Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar. On the previous day, the inhabitants of the city had been warned not to hold meetings, but they, according to the notorious Brigadier-General Dyer, did not pay any heed to it. In his own words: "On 13th April at 16 hours I received a report from the police that a gathering was beginning in the place mentioned above. I immediately sent picquets to hold various gates of the city (to prevent a renewal of the attack of the 10th on the British quarters) and marched with 25

A signal

Amritsar disturbance:

Furious pumping

In
Jallianwala
Bagh

The blood-shed

Rifles 9th Gurkhas, and 25 Rifles from detachments of 54 Sikhs F. F. and 59 Rifles F. F., making a total of 50 Rifles, and also 40 Gurkhas armed with *Kukris*. I entered the Jallianwala Bagh by a very narrow lane which necessitated leaving my armoured car behind. On entering I saw a dense crowd, estimated at about 5,000 (those present put it at 15,000 to 20,000); a man on a raised platform addressing the audience and making gesticulations with his hands.

"I realised that my force was small and to hesitate might induce attack. I immediately opened fire and dispersed the mob. I estimate that between 200 and 300 of the crowd were killed. My party fired 1650 rounds."¹

The killed

Under estimation

This is an under-estimation of the number thus killed. And besides, the number of those who were injured, is too high to make a mention. Blood of the hundreds of the Punjab's heroes who were fired at on the day, still runs in the fibres of the plants which grow in the Bagh, and tells us the story of woes and sacrifices of the illustrious sons of the Punjab who fought for India's independence and laid down their lives.

Gujranwala Bombed

Other places

Martial Law

Hunter Committee's view

But this was not the end of the alien retaliation. On 14th April, a mob was bombed from aeroplane and fired at by machine-guns at Gujranwala. Outbreaks in Gujranwala, Gujerat, Lyallpur, Gurdaspur and other places in the province were ruthlessly crushed. Martial Law was proclaimed Amritsar and Lahore on the 15th, regarding the atrocities of which, much has been said and written. The view of the Hunter Committee on this point may be quoted.

"As regards martial law and orders and cases arising out of the breach thereof, we think it unfortunate that,

1. Dyers report to the Government.

in several important aspects, martial law assumed as intensive a form as it did.....Some of the orders issued were injudicious. They served no good purpose and were not, in our opinion, drawn with sufficient tact to prevent undue annoyance to the civil population."

They then refer to:

1. General Dyer's "crawling" order (which no one Crawling attempted to defend)
2. General Campbell's "slaaming" order, prescribing Slaaming that the people of Gujranwala should accord to British officers "wherever met, the salutation usually accorded to Indian gentlemen of high social position in accordance with the customs of India."
3. Colonel Frank Johnson's orders directing that the students of four, out of ten, Colleges at Lahore which had been implicated in the disturbances should attend roll-calls four times a day to keep them away from spreading sedition.
4. The order of the same officer arresting and interning in the Fort for twenty-four hours from fifty to one hundred students of a College where the martial law orders had been torn down.
5. Public floggings at Lahore and the excessive number of floggings generally.
6. "Fancy" punishments by Captain Doveton at Kasur, e.g. making convicted men touch the ground with their forehead and skipping, in lieu of the ordinary but more severe punishments—such as whipping, fine, and imprisonment¹.

The students

Arresting students

Public flogging

Forehead on ground

1. See O'Dwyer, pp. 302–303.

The Indemnity.

On innocent

But still more interesting was the fact that after having butchered those who were said to be taking a more active part and after having punished through courts those who were said to have been taking less active part in the movement, an Indemnity for the damage in the city of Amritsar was imposed on those who were taking no part at all. The estimated assessment was Rs. 20,56,000. The charge for police Rs 1,43,000 and the remainder for the compensation of those who lost their property. The Amritsar municipality was to recover it by taking temporarily certain higher rates of terminal taxes and by imposing higher rates on the sale of immovable property. The compensation was assessed by the District Magistrate under Section 15-A (2) (c) of the Police Act and was subject to the revision of the Commissioner of the Division or the Local Government. Similarly the cost of additional police was assessable by the District Magistrate under Section 15 (4) of the Police Act.

Voice
against

The voice which was raised against this action of Government in the Punjab Legislative Council and the account in the Legislative Council Report of the scenes created by the discussion on the subject among the opponents is a thing worth studying.

Raja
Narendra
Nath

On 24th February, 1921, Diwan Bahadur Raja Narendra Nath moved in the Legislative Council the following resolution.

The resolu-
tion

"That this Council recommends to His Excellency the Governor-in-Council that the sum imposed in connection with the disturbances of April 1919 on the inhabitants of the city of Amritsar as indemnity for the loss of and for the additional Police be remitted, and that the money advanced by Government, to the Amritsar Municipality to meet the liabilities incurred on this account be debited to the accumulated balance of previous year in the provincial revenues" and following were his arguments:—

Disturbances occurred in the Punjab in 1919 and certain areas were declared as disturbed and dangerous areas under section 15 of the Police Act. This was after the event had taken place.

The arguments

The sections of the Police Act applicable to the cases were section 15, 15-A and Section 16. Section 15 authorised the Local Government to proclaim a certain area to be in a disturbed and dangerous state. It was then lawful to burden the area with additional Police. Then came section 15-A which authorised Government through the District Magistrate to call for application for compensation in respect of injuries inflicted during the disturbance. Section 16 authorised the recovery of the amount. Now section 15-A read:

"If in any area in regard to which any proclamation notified under the preceding section is in force, death or grievous hurt, or loss or damage to property has been caused and so on."

The words, it is to be noted, were not 'has been issued' the words were 'is in force.'

Besides Section 15 came before Section 15-A. Sir Antony Mac Donall who was in charge of the Bill in 1895, while presenting the report of the Select Committee had made these remarks.

Mac
Donall's
remarks

"The Bill differs from the existing law on the following points. The notification proclaiming the area may be prior to, and not simultaneous with, the order to quarter additional police. Further, as a general rule no doubt action will follow without delay on the issue of proclamation, but there may be cases in which the mere issue of proclamation will bring the contending parties to due sense of their responsibility and perhaps by forcing them to compose their quarrel obviate the necessity of any further precautionary measure."

The object

Thus the object of proclamation was to give warning first and if simultaneously the other section was enforced the condition remained unfulfilled.

No power

Now for recovery of amount, he asserted, Section 16 did not say the Municipal Committee should be entrusted with the duty of realizing the tax. He comprehended that Government thinking it was unpopular to recover amount direct, threw that burden on Municipal Committee. But the latter had no such power. Their resolution which the municipality passed undertaking the recovery, did not bind them. Besides there were complaints that the assessment was excessive and in some cases it was in respect of such injuries which did not fall within the purview of section 15-A.

**Punjab
Government
no power**

Besides a correspondent of the "Tribune" had forwarded another argument saying the civil jurisdiction in Amritsar City had ceased when the proclamation was issued. The city was under military authority and not under the Punjab Government. Therefore the Punjab Government had not the power either to issue the proclamation or to call for applications for compensation under section 15—A. So much for the legal aspect of the case.

**Government
responsible**

There were other political aspects involved. There was difference of opinion among Indians and Europeans regarding the location of responsibility and it was quite observable that Indian opinion was gaining ground and the official opinion was coming round. According to the Indian opinion, the 1919 trouble was of an ordinary type but Government excited them by immediate repressive measures.

**Only small
section**

Further only a small section of the people was responsible for that ordinary disturbance but indemnity was being imposed upon so many of them who were innocent.

Public opinion in the Punjab was rising against the assessment. Advanced politicians were already out of the Council, due to non-co-operation and the Diwan appealed to the members therefore to give the matter deep consideration.

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz, supporting the resolution asserted in his own way that, the disturbance took place on the 10th of April, i.e. 3 days subsequent to the injuries, caused to the Europeans, and under the provisions the proclamation had no retrospective effect on those incidents which were caused on the 10th.

Moreover the compensation paid to many Europeans and the bank, he added, had been excessive and he understood that the National Bank of India, and the Alliance Bank had made the best bargain.

The Duke of Connaught had already remitted the indemnity imposed on the town of Ahmedabad, and he submitted that it would be proper for the Council to pass that resolution.

Mr. K. L. Rallia Ram supporting the resolution maintained that money should be remitted, but out of the accumulated balances, or some other source which might be found. After giving the present reforms (in 1919) and privileges to the public it would be bad to revive the old bitter memories.

But Pandit Daulat Ram Kalia had another point to forward. Even if admitting that it was legal to charge Amritsar people of the indemnity, because of the foot prints of their went to a village and the thief was not found, the whole village had to pay the price, he said, in December 1919 the King issued a proclamation inviting the ruler and the ruled to forget the past. And since the Bar Association of Amritsar had sent an appeal to the members of the Council for remittance in spite of the

Shah
Nawaz
supports

Compensa-
tion
excessive

Case of
Ahmedabad

Rallia
Ram's view

Daulat Ram
Kalia's
point

Forget the
past

instruction from Congress not to co-operate with and get the services of the Council members, the encouragement of the Bar Association members should be appreciated and indemnity remitted. But he did not agree that the indemnity should be paid out of the Provincial Balance.

**Chaudhri
Fazal Ali's
view**

Khan Sahib Chaudhri Fazal Ali said, the Government might remit the indemnity but why should it be paid out of the accumulated balances and thus zamindars be made to pay for the misdoings of the Amritsar Public.

Illegal

Indemnity was illegal and to pay it from the Provincial Balance was also to make the progressive work of the whole province suffer. It should therefore be refused by the persons to whom it was paid without the assent of the Council, or it should be paid as resolved by Diwan Bahadur Raja Narendra Nath, first, from the accumulated funds, and subsequently money be realized from the Government nazul land within the municipal limits of the Amritsar Municipality, said Sayad Muhammad Hussain.

**Bakhtawar
Singh**

Sardar Bakhtawar Singh speaking next said the interest of Rs. one crore that the Government had, should be raised from 3½ to 6% and this would realize the amount in eight years.

**Sayad
Mehdi
opposed it**

But to Khan Bahadur Sayad Mehdi Shah these arguments were not acceptable. If Amritsar which had committed the crime did not pay the indemnity they would not learn a lesson. If indemnity was paid out of Provincial Balance the innocent zamindars would suffer for what the Amritsar people had done. Money of the Provincial Balance was to be spent for roads & hospitals and moreover why zamindars should be made to carry the burden, he posed forcefully.

Mr. P. J. Fagan had his own arguments to forward. It was not proper he said, to blame Government for the responsibility of the disturbances, the Government was faced with a movement of the most sinister and of the most menacing type.

Was the Province to understand that its reformed Legislative Council was prepared to condone doings such as these of Amritsar? Was the entire Province to suffer for this misdoings of a few? Where the doings of Amritsar to deprive the women of the Province of an institution destined to alleviate their sufferings? Was the beneficent work of co-operative societies to be similarly hampered? Or was the Provision of a suitable building for the highest court of the Province to be arrested?

Malik Feroz Kahn Noon was also one of the opponents of the resolution. For two days a heated discussion was carried on the subject. Various points were forwarded for and against the resolution the detailed study of which would be too large to include in this article. After a thorough discussion, it was on 25th February 1921, that the resolution was put to vote, the results of which were, 56 for the resolution and 13 against. Thus the resolution was passed by a majority of 43. This was a victory not only for the 56 members who voted for the resolution it was rather a victory of the whole cause the cause of the freedom of the Indian masses. The people had awokened, they had started marching on the long road to freedom, the end of which was yet one quarter of a century off.

Fagan's view

How?

Feroz Khan Noon opposed

V victory

CHAPTER XXV

The Disturbances

F—The Akali Movement.

The causes

According to Sikh traditions men of the highest moral character should hold charge of 'Gurdwaras'. Sikh history is replete with the names of men like Bhai Mani Singh who preferred martyrdom, by being cut to pieces rather than pay his fine out of the funds of the community, he being at the time the high priest of the Golden temple at Amritsar. On the advent of the British Government, however, the word 'possession' acquired different meaning. No distinction was made between possession as owners and possession as servants. The result was that the incumbents began to exert personal rights. The protests of the Sikhs were of no avail, in the face of the British theory of possession. If they persisted in their demands, the Government arranged matters by assuming the power of appointing managers, as in the case of the Golden Temple and the connected Gurdwaras. Managers and 'mahants' began to look upon the Government for protection and support against their masters and the richer and larger institutions became virtually departments of Government or at any rate dependants on the Government.

Character-less

The *Mahants* started the practice of nominating their relations or favourites as their successors, regardless of their character or fitness for the post. 'Gurdwara' income increased due to Canal irrigation and increased offering. The '*Mahant*' became more and more depraved. 'Gurdwaras' became dens of sin. The *Mahants* kept mistresses whom they provided with millions worth of property out of 'gurdwara' funds.

The Legislative measures

In every country charitable endowments form an integral part of the social system and therefore Government is believed to be the trustee of those endowments—to see that the object for which those endowments have been created are fulfilled and that those who are placed in charge of those trusts carry out the objects for which

those trusts were created. So far as India is concerned, there were a number of legislative measures on the Statute Book, some of them dating very far back. One was Regulation XIX of 1810 of the Bengal Code Unrepealed Acts. The second was Regulation VI of 1817; third, Act XX of 1863; fourth Act VI of 1890, fifth the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code; and Sixth, Act XIV of 1920 relating to charitable societies. Now, the first two of these legislative measures did not apply to the Punjab. So far as Act XX of 1863 was concerned, though applicable to the Province, it could be left out of account, as there were no religious endowments which fell under its provisions. Act VI of 1890 had not been made much use of. Provisions of the Civil Procedure Code were thus the only ones under which religious and charitable endowments in this Province could be controlled by their beneficiaries. Under Act XIX of 1920, certain facilities had been afforded to the beneficiaries to control the management, but they did not go far enough; so the result was that in the Province such legislative measures as existed enabling the beneficiaries to control the management of trusts by the trustees, were enabling provisions, which the public at large could not effectively use. For instance take the case of a particular *mahant* of a Gurdwara, who was using the trust funds for purposes other than those for which they were intended. Now the law as it stood made it obligatory on two, three or more beneficiaries of that trust to join together and go to the Deputy Commissioner and obtain permission from him to sue the *mahant*. That needed money and time before they could prosecute their petition; and then the Deputy Commissioner might or might not grant permission. Then again they had to spend money on court-fees before they could put in their claim. Public spirited Sikhs could not always resolve these difficulties and thus the management of gurdwaras was deteriorating. It is clear that the existing

Their
Character

Not a ready remedy

law on the subject which really consisted of the provisions of the civil procedure Code, was not the ready remedy that was needed. Need of the time was that there should be more a summary and less expensive remedy which this law was not.

Special character

Nor was it realised that the Sikh gurdwaras were very much on different footing from ordinary religious and charitable endowments. Sikhs have charitable endowments as Hindus and Mahomedans have. But a gurdwara, which means the place of Guru, had a different application. If there is mis-management of gurdwaras, Sikhs must go there and improve it, they cannot wait and cannot have another gurdwara in its place as in the case of other endowments. In the case of a gurdwara, possession is not to be looked in the same light as other secular property or as in the case of religious endowments. If a few Sikhs wants to go to a Gurdwara and remain there, they cannot be prevented from it. Thus the Sikhs could easily wait for the settlement of Dharamsalas like Hindus, but it was difficult to do so in the case of Gurdwaras. They looked and looked invain to Government for help. But when it was not forthcoming, they had their own way, though not perfectly legal. Desperate maladies always require desperate remedies.

Looked invain

Other causes

Rikab Gunj

Sikh activities condemned

There were other causes for the organisation of the movement. After the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911, to cut a road through the Rikab Ganj Gurdwara to the Viceregal Lodge at Delhi, the Government acquired some land from the accomodating priest of the Gurdwara and pulled down one of its walls for the purpose. This aroused the resentment of the Sikhs against the Government yet further. But due to the war, the issue was shelved for some time.

The Sikhs had taken a major part in the Ghadr Movement. They had made sacrifices in the cases such as that of the Kamagata Maru, and were responsible for engineering local troubles in the Punjab. In all such cases, the

Mahants supported the British in the Gurdwaras, and condemned the Sikh activities.

The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy spoiled the atmosphere yet further. Hundreds had been left there dead or dying and Mr. Winston Churchill himself had agreed that, that was "an extraordinary event, a monstrous event, an event which stood in singular and sinister isolation." Yet instead of condemning Dyer, the man who had perpetrated such a horrible crime, the *Mahants* rather honoured him at the Golden Temple as a defender of the Sikh faith although more than 1/3 of those thus murdered by him were the Sikhs themselves. It was a height of the *Mahants'* depravity and their moral perversion, especially so when Dyer's action had been condemned as a naked brutality whole over the world, and by his kins-folk in England themselves.

Jallianwala
tragedy

Dyer
honoured

The Sikhs had contributed in the War, according to the estimate of Sir John Maynard, ten times more than what any other community in India did. Enjoying a special position as land owners, they paid as much as 40 percent of the total Provincial Revenue. Yet in the Montague-Chelmsford reforms, they got a representation only in proportion to their population. The Muslims, where in minority, had been given a special weightage, but no such consideration was given to the Sikhs. The Sikhs were thus convinced that the British Government would give them no help in the Gurdwaras.

Sikh contrib-
utions in
War

Poorly
rewarded

In 1919, the Indians National Conference met at Amritsar. Just this time, Mahatma Gandhi launched a mass civil disobedience. The Muslims joined him for the British treatment towards Turkey after the war. The Sikhs too had their grievances. And they joined the Mahatma. In a meeting held in October 1920, and attended by Mahatma Gandhi, a resolution of non-co-operation with

Joined Non-
co-operation

the Government was passed. And this set the ball rolling. The meeting was attended among others by Master Tara Singh, Mehtab Singh, Harbans Singh of Attari and Kharak Singh.

Dissatisfaction and action

It was in 1919 that considerable dissatisfaction was expressed with the management of the Golden Temple at Amritsar, and its manager was vehemently criticised. The appointment of a Sarbarah in 1920 did little to allay the agitation, as the demand was for complete control to be placed in the hands of the Sikh community. In September 1920 there was a movement in favour of raising a body of Sikh martyrs to repair the wall of the Rikabganj Gurdwara at Delhi. In October, 1920 the management of the Takht Akal Bunga at Golden Temple was bitterly criticised, and on the 28th October 1920, a Jatha of the Central Majha Diwan took possession of a part of the 'langar' of the Golden Temple.

S.G.P.C.
organised
Nov. 1920

It was now decided that the Sikhs should have a representative Committee to manage all the Sikh Gurdwaras. Invitations were sent by the Jathedar of Akal Takhat to the four Takhats, the Gurdwaras, Schools, Colleges, the Sikhs in the Army and other Sikh organisations, to send their representatives to meet in a conference at Amritsar. The conference was held on 15th and 16th of November, 1920, and a committee of 175 representatives was appointed to manage and administer all the Sikh Gurdwaras according to the dictate of the Sikh religion and the principles of the *Panthic* organisation. The 26 members of the committee appointed by the Government to manage Shri Darbar Sahib, Taran Taran and some other Gurdwaras, were also included in this committee, which was named as the Shromni Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.

In its meeting of December 12, 1920, the Committee thus formed, elected Sunder Singh Majitha as its President. Harbans Singh Atari was elected as Vice-President and Sunder Singh Ramgarhia as Secretary.

Office-holders

On December 14, 1920, a movement named Shromni Akali Dal was organised to work for the reforms in the Gurdwaras, under the directions of the Shromni Committee. As the time passed, however, the Dal began to take interest in the political problems of the Sikhs as well, and later on it became their main political party. It was this party which sent *Jathas* to the different Gurdwaras, captured them and handed them over to the Shromni Committee for management.

Akali Dal
organised
Dec. 1920

In 1920, a Gurmukhi paper 'The Akali', was started, following by 'the Khalsa Advocate', 'the Khalsa Sewak Punjab' and 'The Panth Sewak'. On behalf of the mahants and Pujaris, the parties in possession, it was alleged, that the Akali *Jathas* had by show of force, even armed force established a reign of terror, thus making the *mahants* and Pujaris either to surrender possession or to make terms. Whenever a mahant had not submitted to the Akali *Jathas*, it is alleged that he came to grief. In the month of November the Akali *Jatha* seized Panja Sahib shrine at Hassan Abdal. In December the Sacha Sauda Gurdwara of Sheikhupura District was seized by an Akali Jatha and the mahant was expelled. In January 1921, the Gurdwara in Chola village in the Amritsar District was seized by a party of Sikhs of the Majha who proceeded to Taran Taran where a riot took place and there was bloodshed. Long before this, similar incidents had happened at Baba ki-Ber shrine in the Sialkot District and the Gojra Gurdwara in the Lyallpur District. On 31st January 1921, it

The journals

Reign of
terrorGurdwaras
occupied

is said that the Akali Dal of Wachhoha went to Guru-ka-Bagh Gurdwara and settled terms with *mahant* Sunder Das. When these activities of the Akali *Jathas* intensified it was felt that legislation be enacted in order to appease those who were genuinely out for the reform of their religious institutions. Accordingly on 8th February a communique was issued pointing out that on the Legislative Council assembling necessary steps would be taken to meet all legitimate demands for reform in the law relating to charitable and religious endowments. This however, appears not to have had much effect. On the 11th and 12th February a large party of Akalis went to Khadur Sahib gurdwara, Amritsar District, and took possession of it, together with some shops and land adjoining it, expelling the *mahant* from the said place. The Jatha was alleged to have demolished an idol in the gurdwara, worshipped by Hindus. The government realising the situation, issued the following communique :—

The Committee

"In view of the recent troubles connected with some of the Sikh shrines in the Punjab, the Government has decided to move the Legislative Council to appoint a Committee to examine the question relating generally and to prepare such legislation as may be necessary to meet the existing situation."

Not enough

It was felt, however, that this announcement was not enough, and as the Council was not to meet till the 23rd of February, it was announced that at the meeting of the Legislative Council the following resolution would be moved by Sardar Bahadur Sardar Mehtab Singh:—

The Resolution

"(a) That this Council moves the local Government to appoint a Committee of enquiry to consider the existing management and to report on the best method of settling disputes and of regulating the future control of the institution."

(b) That the aforementioned Committee will be constituted so as to give adequate representation to all parties concerned.

It was felt that in the interval, i.e. before the meeting of the Council at which the above resolution was to be moved, a conference of the Sikhs representing the party of reform and the party in possession of the gurdwaras and shrines be called to meet at Lahore with the object of formulating the points at issue between them, where possible settling of their disputes amicably and such points as remained in dispute should be gone into by the Committee to be appointed in pursuance of Sardar Mehtab Singh's resolution. Unfortunately, this conference did not come off. The *Jatha* party went on organising and maturing plans for taking possession of gurdwaras, while the party in possession declared conference of their own to be held at Lahore on the 19th and 20th February. Thus neither the conference proposed by government nor the news of the resolution to be moved by Sardar Mehtab Singh in the Legislative Council succeeded in preventing the Jathas and the party in possession from coming in conflict with each other.

Conference proposed

No effect

It was on the 20th February that a gruesome tragedy occurred at Nankana. It was unparalleled in the history of the Province. An Akali Jatha peacefully went into the Gurdwara and wanted to stay there, and so long as they did not use force, no sane person could object to it. No force was ever used by these persons, it is said, but the *mahant* was ready with it. How those people whose only crime was that they wanted to exercise their birth right, were butchered, cut and burnt, under the authority of the *mahant*, is a story too well known. As far as can be ascertained the number of those killed in Nankana Tragedy was 130. Throughout the province, all communities, Hindus and Mahomedans expressed their sympathy with those who had suffered.

The
Nankana
Tragedy

130 killed

No effect

One would have imagined that an incident like that would sober the enthusiasm of the Akali Jatha and that in time of grief like that the activities of the Akali Jatha would abate, but it was not so.

The Keys' affair

Soon after occurred the clash between the Sikhs and the Government on the question of holding the keys of the treasury of the Golden temple. The Government refused to accept the Shromni Committee as a representative body of the Sikhs and took the keys in its own control. The Sikhs were agitated Protest meetings were held and resolutions were passed condemning the Government's action. Some of the Sikh leaders such as Kharak Singh, Mehtab Singh, Bhag Singh, Hari Singh Jullundhri, Gurcharan Singh Pleader, Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri, Dan Singh, Jawant Singh, Teja Singh Samundri and Pandit Dina Nath were arrested and punished heavily. But this made the agitation only more violent. The Congress and the *Khilafat* Committee supported the Sikhs, and ultimately the Government had to bow before the Sikhs. The Keys were handed over to the Shromni Committee and the Sikh leaders were released from the jails. When Mahatma Gandhi got this news, he commented that the Sikhs had won "the first decisive battle" against the Government.

First victory

Daring sacrifices

As the movement for reforms in the Sikh Gurdwaras developed, the Sikhs made many daring sacrifice in capturing the different Gurdwaras. A special mention may here be made of some of the battles the Sikhs fought against the vested interests and as to how they won them.

The Guru ka Bagh.

Situated

This Gurdwara, the Guru Ka Bagh, is a famous place of the Sikh religious worship situated at a distance of 13 miles from Amritsar in the Ajnala Tehsil. At the

time of the organisation of the Shromni Committee and the Shromni Dal, *Mahant* Sunder Dass was in-charge of the Gurdwara, and he was said to be a man of very weak character. In January 1921, Darshan Singh Wichhoa was appointed by the Shromni Committee to meet the *Mahant* and ask him to improve his character. In a Sikh congregation at the Guru Ka Bagh on 31st January, the Mahant was asked (1) not to have illicit connection with any woman and to marry one and lead an honest life; (2) to receive baptism and work as a subordinate to the Shromni Committee. The Mahant agreed to do so and later on actually did as was required of him. But the Nankana incidence later encouraged him and he began to show a stiff and characterless attitude once again.

Character-less Mahant

On August 23, 1921, the Shromni Dal sent a *Jatha* under the leadership of Dan Singh to take over the charge of the Gurdwara. Charge of the Gurdwara was taken over by the *Jatha* but the *Mahant* claimed the land attached to the Gurdwara as his personal property, and called in the police. On August 8, five Sikhs went and brought some wood from the *Kikars* in the land, to be used in the community kitchen of the Gurdwara. They were arrested and later fined and committed to imprisonment. This was a challenge to the Committee and its authority and a signal for a serious clash between the Sikhs and the Government. The Mahant had already signed his subordination to the Committee, and it was wrong for the Government to have separated the Gurdwara issue from that of its land.

A Jatha sent

Imprisoned

Soon other *Jathas* were sent to remove wood from the land. The members of these *Jathas* were severely beaten, their hair pulled and they were thrown into ditches. Hundreds of Sikhs thus received severe injuries, as the *Jathas* after *Jathas* went to remove wood from the land.

More Jathas

Not few succumbed to their injuries. New hospitals were set up by the Committee at Amritsar to treat the wounded Sikhs, and the daily expenditure of the Committee on this score alone rose to the figure of Rs. 3,000. It was a unique example of sacrifices presented by the Akalis. Thus wrote Lala Mela Ram in the connection:

تیری قربانی کی دھوم سے آج ایک زمانے میں
بہادر ہے اگر کوئی تو وہ تو اعلیٰ ہے
تیرا جنم مقدس پیکر ایثار بے پایاب
ثرا قلب ہے منور فخر جذباتی عالیٰ ہے
بڑی تعریف کے قابل تیری ہمت و حربات
حد و جهد آزادی میں تو نے جان ڈالی ہے
کیا ہے ذندہ تو نے روایتِ گذشتہ کو
ستمگروں سے تو نے قوم کی غزت بچالی ہے
قاموں کی لا جھیاں تو نے سعین سید سپر ہو کو
لطف اس پر کر لب پر شکافتی ہے رنگائی ہے

Condemned

The Government atrocities were condemned whole over India, by all the national leaders and by all the political parties.

Punja
Sahib
tragedy

In the mean while occurred the Punja Sahib tragedy which turned the attention of the whole nation towards the Sikhs, and which convinced the imperialist Government that the Sikh spirit of religious independence could in no way be crushed. During this period a *Jatha* composed of the pensioners from the Army, and led by one

Subedar Amar Singh, had been arrested, and ordered to be sent to the Attock jail. The Sikhs at Punja Sahib learnt that the train taking the *Jatha* was to pass through that route. They requested the authorities to stop the train at Punja Sahib to give them an opportunity to entertain their brethren, which was refused. Two valiant figures among them, Karam Singh and Pratap Singh laid themselves on the Railway line, as the train approached. The train passed over them, and they were cut to pieces. The train was stopped, the flesh and the bones of these heroes were disentangled from the wheels of the engine and of the bogies by their brethren with tears gushing forth from their eyes. Refreshment was offered to the members of the *Jatha*, though no one of them partook it in the circumstance. It is an incidence which will ever shine as a glorious example of a daring Sikh deed.

Train stopped

The authorities were moved, on November 17, 1922, the Sikh rights were conceded and thus the peace was restored.

Conceded

It was the incidences of this type which inspired some of the Sikhs to undertake violent activities, and organise the Bubar Akali Movement. The Bubars ran their own paper, in one of which once a poem was published, a few lines of which are given here-under.

The Bubar
Akali

ਬਾਉਂ ਬਾਈਂ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਜੰਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ,
ਬੀਰੇ ਜਾਲਮਾਂ ਤਾਈਂ ਖਪਾਣ ਲਗ ਪਉ ।
ਬੇਤਾ ਕੋਮ ਦਾ ਸਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਨੇ ਗਰੜ ਕੀਤਾ,
ਸਿਰੀਂ ਜਾਲਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਖਾਕ ਪਾਣ ਲਗ ਪਉ ।

....

ਅਖੀਂ ਵੇਖ ਬਿਅਰਬੀਆਂ ਚੁਪ ਬੈਠਾ,
ਕਾਇਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਭਟ ਟਪਾਇਆ ਕਿਉਂ ?
ਮੂਹਰੇ ਬਾਂਦਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਰੋਂ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਵਾਲੀ,
ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਜ ਸਦਾਇਆ ਕਿਉਂ ?

The Bubar Movement was started in August 1922. On April 24, 1923, the Shromni Committee condemned an appeal to violent activities, though it appreciated the feelings which led to the organisation of this Movement.

The Jaito.

Nabha
Maharaja

Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha was removed from his throne by the British Government on July 9, 1923. The Sikh community sympathised with the Maharaja and considered the Government's action as a naked aggression against the Maharaja. On August, 5, 1923, a resolution was passed at a meeting of the Shromni Committee which expressed sympathy with the Maharaja. The Sikhs tried to hold a congregation in the Gurdwara Gungsar, Jaito, in Nabha, to condemn the action of the Government. The Government tried to place a hindrance in the way which resulted in one more clash between the Sikhs and the authorities.

At Jaito

Jatha to
Jai

On February 21, 1924, the first *Jatha* of 500 valiant Sikhs started for Jaito to hold an *Akhand Paath* in the Gungsar Gurdwara. At the time of their departure from the Akal Takhat, a message was read out on the behalf of the *Jatha* to the Sikh congregation, which read:

ਸੁਣੋ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ! ਸਾਡੇ ਦੂਰ ਭੇਠੇ,
 ਅਸੀਂ ਆਖਰੀ ਛਤ੍ਰ ਬੁਲਾ ਚਲੇ ।
 ਪਾਉ ਬੀਂ ਤੇ ਸਾਂਭ ਕੇ ਫਸਲ ਵਹੋ,
 ਅਸੀਂ ਭੇਲੂ ਕੇ ਰੱਤ ਪਿਆ ਚਲੇ ।
 ਚੰਬਦਾਰ ਦੇ ਵਾਗ ਅਵਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਕੇ,
 ਧੈਸੇ ਦੂਰ ਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਵਜਾ ਚਲੇ ।
 ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਅਕਲ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨਾ,
 ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੰਢ ਨਿਡਾ ਚਲੇ ।
 ਬੜਾ ਚੁਲਮ ਦਾ ਅੰਤ ਨੂੰ ਗਰੜ ਹੋਸੀ,
 ਹੰਤੂ ਖੂਨ ਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਵਹਾ ਚਲੇ ।

ੴ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਆਪ ਦਸ਼ਮੇਵ ਰਾਖਾ,
 ਕੰਡੇ ਤੁੰਥ ਕੇ ਕਰ ਸਫ਼ਾ ਚਲੇ ।
 ਅੰਗ ਸਾਕ ਕਬੀਲਤਾ ਬਾਲ ਬੱਚਾ,
 ਬਾਂਹ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਥ ਢਤਾ ਚਲੇ ।
 ਵਈ ਨਾਵ ਮੰਜੋਗ ਦੇ ਹੱਣ ਮੇਲੇ,
 ਸਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਗਜਾ ਚਲੇ ।

When the *Jatha* entered the Nabha territory, it was challenged by the authorities, and asked not to move ahead. With *Guru Guranth* in the midst and reciting the Sikh *Bani*, the *Jatha*, however, moved on. A military force was at hand, and it was asked to fire at the armless and peaceful Sikhs moving towards the place of their religious worship. Instantaneously, according to a tract published by the Shromni Committee, 100 Sikhs lay dead and about 200 severely injured. The *Jatha* still moved on. And a story is told. A mother had joined the *Jatha* with her babe in her arms, when it was on the march. When it was fired at, one of the bullets passed through the body of her babe and took its soul away. But such was the devotion of the mother to the Sikh cause, that burying the babe in the sand nearby, she moved ahead with the *Jatha* as bravely as ever.

100 killed
200 injured

A mother &
babe

It was a brutal masacere. Mr. Jawahar Lal Nehru also went later to see the situation when he was arrested but released after a few weeks' imprisonment.

Mr. Nehru

This, however, did not discourage the Sikhs. The Sikhs began to pour down in great numbers, not only from the Punjab, but also from other parts of the country and even from the lands over-sea. In all, seventeen *Jathas*, of 500 each were sent. After the first *Jatha* the others were only imprisoned and not fired at. Besides, the Sikhs from the foreign lands constituted their own *Jathas* and courted arrests. Ultimately in 1925, the Punjab Governmet had to pass a Gurdwara Act, in which the demands made by the Sikhs were

Not
discouraged

17 Jathas

Gurdwara

conceded and thus the control of all the Gurdwaras passed into the Sikh hands.

A gallant part

The Akali Dal has played a real *wondrous* and gallant part in getting the Gurdwaras freed from the hands of the vested interests. No doubt many a precious life had to be sacrificed, but ultimately it did succeed in its mission. The story of the illustrious Akalis who laid down their lives to serve the cause of their brethren, will always occupy a pride position in the Sikh history. Thus wrote Maulana Zaffar Ali Khan in a poem published in the 'Zamindar':

میں کیا تھیزیبِ معرب کی اس شادوں کے بارے میں
بھی دیکھا ہی کیا ہے تم نے اس خونی نظام سے کی
بہت سے کھیل باقی ہیں مداری کے پثار سے میں
جنما کی گوہی بازارِ مظلومی کی رونق سے
رنا کوئی ہے ظالم کی تجارت ہی خوارے میں
پنٹ کر زیر دست آزار کو اک دن اٹھ دے گی
یہی گردش جو ہے اس وقت سکھوں کے ستارے میں
بہائے ہیں جنوں نے سکسوں کے نون کے دریا
وہ خود بہہ جائیں گے تقدیر کی ندی تے دھارے میں
تمہیں بختا گیا ہے دیدائے بینا تو دیکھو گے
هزاروں را کھ کے ڈھیر اک نایم کے شوارے میں



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